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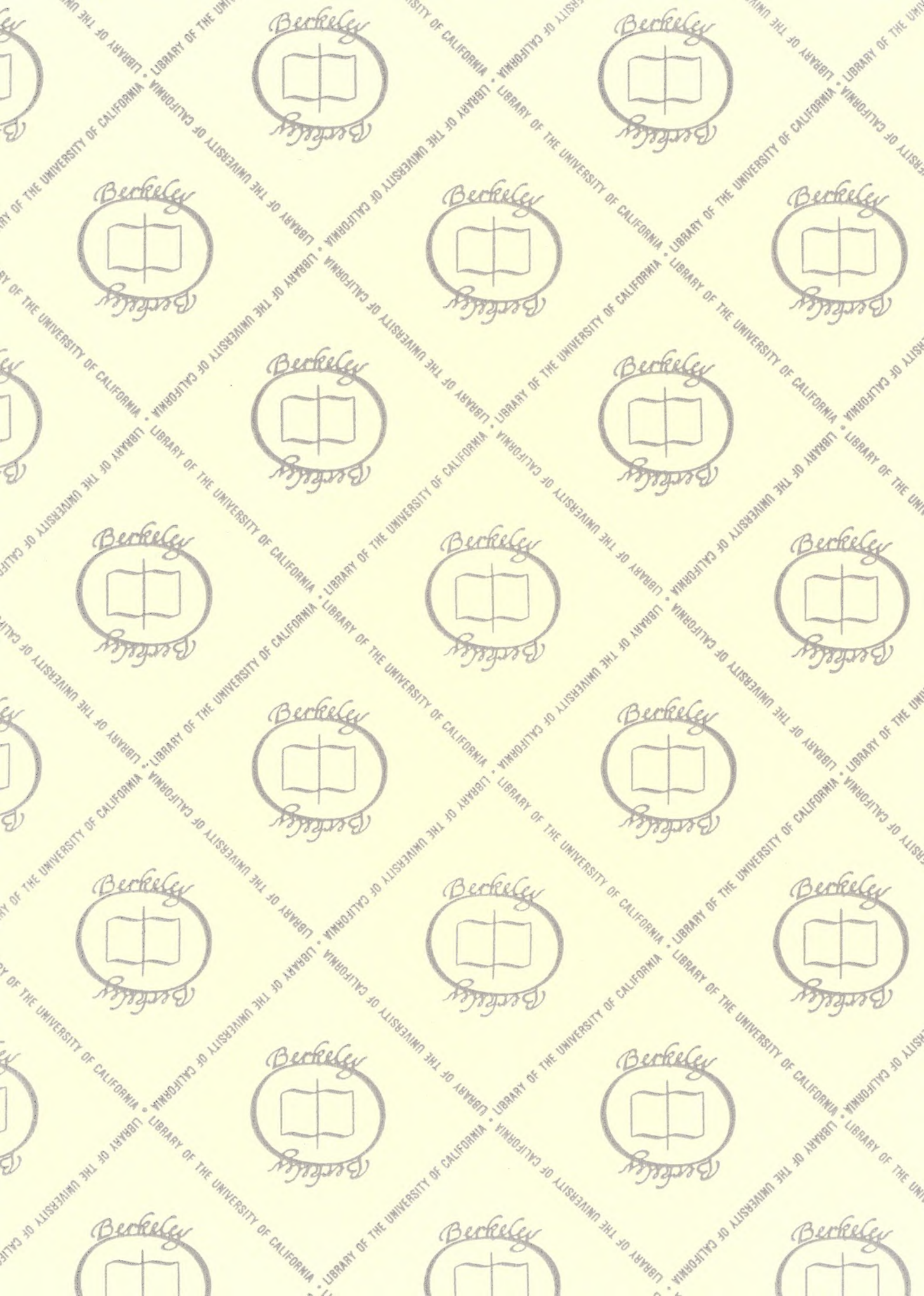
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Women in Politics Oral History Project

HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS PROJECT

Volume II

THE CONGRESS YEARS, 1944-1950

Interviews with:

Juanita Terry Barbee	Arthur Goldschmidt
Rachel Bell	Elizabeth Wickenden Goldschmidt
Albert Cahn	Charles A. Hogan
Margery Cahn	Chester A. Holifield
Evelyn Chavoor	Mary Dublin Keyserling
Lucy Kramer Cohen	Philip J. Noel-Baker

Interviews Conducted by  
Amelia Fry, Fern Ingersoll, and Ingrid Scobie  
in 1976, 1977, 1978

Underwritten by grants from:

National Endowment for the Humanities, Rockefeller Foundation,  
Members and Friends of the Los Angeles Democratic Women's Forum

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The Congress Years, 1944-1950

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## PREFACE

The following interview is one of a series of tape-recorded memoirs in the California Women Political Leaders Oral History Project. The series has been designed to study the political activities of a representative group of California women who became active in politics during the years between the passage of the woman's suffrage amendment and the current feminist movement--roughly the years between 1920 and 1965. They represent a variety of views: conservative, moderate, liberal, and radical, although most of them worked within the Democratic and Republican parties. They include elected and appointed officials at national, state, and local governmental levels. For many the route to leadership was through the political party--primarily those divisions of the party reserved for women.

Regardless of the ultimate political level attained, these women have all worked in election campaigns on behalf of issues and candidates. They have raised funds, addressed envelopes, rung doorbells, watched polls, staffed offices, given speeches, planned media coverage, and when permitted, helped set policy. While they enjoyed many successes, a few also experienced defeat as candidates for public office.

Their different family and cultural backgrounds, their social attitudes, and their personalities indicate clearly that there is no typical woman political leader; their candid, first-hand observations and their insights about their experiences provide fresh source material for the social and political history of women in the past half century.

In a broader framework their memoirs provide valuable insights into the political process as a whole. The memoirists have thoughtfully discussed details of party organization and the work of the men and women who served the party. They have analysed the process of selecting party leaders and candidates, running campaigns, raising funds, and drafting party platforms, as well as the more subtle aspects of political life such as maintaining harmony and coping with fatigue, frustration, and defeat. Perceived through it all are the pleasures of friendships, struggles, and triumphs in a common cause.

The California Women Political Leaders Oral History Project has been financed by both an outright and a matching grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Matching funds were provided by the Rockefeller Foundation for the Helen Gahagan Douglas component of the project, by the Columbia and Fairtree Foundations, and by individuals who were interested in supporting memoirs of their friends and colleagues. In addition, funds from the California State Legislature-sponsored Knight-Brown Era Governmental History Project made it possible to increase the research and broaden the scope of the interviews in which there was

a meshing of the woman's political career with the topics being studied in the Knight-Brown project. Professors Judith Blake Davis, Albert Lepawsky, and Walton Bean have served as principal investigators during the period July 1975-December 1977 that the project was underway. This series is the second phase of the Women in Politics Oral History Project, the first of which dealt with the experiences of eleven women who had been leaders and rank-and-file workers in the suffrage movement.

The Regional Oral History Office was established to tape record autobiographical interviews with persons significant in the history of the West and the nation. The Office is under the administrative supervision of James D. Hart, Director of The Bancroft Library. Interviews were conducted by Amelia R. Fry, Miriam Stein, Gabrielle Morris, Malca Chall, Fern Ingersoll, and Ingrid Scobie.

Malca Chall, Project Director  
Women in Politics Oral History Project

Willa Baum, Department Head  
Regional Oral History Office

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- Odessa Cox, *Challenging the Status Quo: The Twenty-seven Year Campaign for Southwest Junior College*. 1979, 149 p.
- March Fong Eu, *High Achieving Nonconformist in Local and State Government*. 1977, 245 p.
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- Rosalind Wyman, *"It's a Girl:" Three Terms on the Los Angeles City Council, 1953-1965; Three Decades in the Democratic Party, 1948-1979*. 1979, 150 p.

## Interviews in Process

Marjorie Benedict, Pauline Davis, Ann Eliaser, Elinor R. Heller, Lucile Hosmer, Emily Pike, Carmen Warschaw, Mildred Younger.

August 1980



The Helen Gahagan Douglas Component of the California Women Political Leaders  
Oral History Project

Volume I: *The Political Campaigns*

Discussion primarily of the 1950 Senate campaign and defeat, in interviews with Tilford E. Dudley, India T. Edwards, Leo Goodman, Kenneth R. Harding, Judge Byron F. Lindsley, Helen Lustig, Alvin P. Meyers, Frank Rogers, and William Malone.\*

Volume II: *The Congress Years, 1944-1950*

Discussion of organization and staffing; legislation on migrant labor, land, power and water, civilian control of atomic energy, foreign policy, the United Nations, social welfare, and economics, in interviews with Juanita E. Barbee, Rachel S. Bell, Albert S. Cahn, Margery Cahn, Evelyn Chavoor, Lucy Kramer Cohen, Arthur Goldschmidt, Elizabeth Wickenden Goldschmidt, Chester E. Holifield, Charles Hogan, Mary Keyserling, and Philip J. Noel-Baker.

Volume III: *Family, Friends, and the Theater: The Years Before and After Politics*

Discussion of Helen and Melvyn Douglas and their activities at home with their family and among friends, and their work in the theater and movies, in interviews with Fay Bennett, Alis De Sola, Cornelia C. Palms, and Walter R. Pick.

Volume IV: *Congresswoman, Actress, and Opera Singer*

Helen Gahagan Douglas discusses her background and childhood; Barnard College education; Broadway, theater and opera years; early political organization and Democratic party work; the congressional campaigns, supporters; home and office in Washington; issues during the Congress years, 1944-1950; the 1950 Senate campaign against Richard M. Nixon, and aftermath; women and independence; occupations since 1950; speaking engagements, travel to Russia, South America, Liberia inauguration, civic activities, life in Vermont. (Volume in process)

\*William Malone preferred not to release his transcript at this time.

April 1981

## INTRODUCTION

Helen Gahagan Douglas, one of the most notable women to grace the American artistic and political scenes during the past half-century, died of cancer in June 1980 at the age of eighty. Despite frequent hospitalization and progressive weakness during the last several years of her life, she courageously refused drugs to ease her pain, preferring to keep her mind clear so that she could remain close to her family; so that she, among other activities, could speak to a congressional hearing in Washington by phone on behalf of cancer research; so that she could organize assistance programs for children in New York City; and so that she could complete her autobiography. She insisted on living as fully as possible until the disease overtook her. A year before her death, she received a Medal of Distinction from her alma mater Barnard College, for her "fearless, lifetime devotion to the cause of political, racial and religious freedoms and for instructing us in citizenship, in responsibility and in service to ideals and country."

Within her lifetime, three generations of Americans came to know Helen Douglas. First a generation knew her as a beautiful and highly talented stage and movie actress whose storybook romance with fellow actor Melvyn Douglas culminated in a marriage that lasted nearly fifty years. She then picked up another generation when, taking leave of her career as an actress, she devoted her energies, her intelligence, and her charisma to politics. She was Democratic National Committeewoman for California (1940-1944), vice-chair of the California Democratic party in charge of its women's division (1942-1944), Congresswoman from California (1944-1950), and an alternate delegate to the United Nations General Assembly (1946).

During these ten years she pled the cause of the poor and helpless, especially the migrant farm worker, fought successfully for civilian control of atomic energy, and argued the case for improved international relations. In 1950 she lost a hard-fought campaign for Senate to Richard Nixon and disappeared from public attention. She and Melvyn moved to New York and Vermont, where she continued to study and lecture about those issues to which she had always been committed--human rights and world peace. And as always, her activities involved her family and many close and devoted friends.

After the advent of Watergate in 1972 the media sought her out to appraise Richard Nixon in light of her experiences. Thus a third generation was introduced to the legendary Helen Gahagan Douglas.

This volume is one of four that comprise the Helen Gahagan Douglas Unit of the California Women Political Leaders Oral History Project, a unit to document the career of this leading humanitarian and political figure.

In 1974 the Regional Oral History Office received a grant and a matching grant offer from the National Endowment for the Humanities to develop a series of biographical interviews with women who had held leadership positions in



California politics between 1920 and 1965. Helen Gahagan Douglas, one of the best known women in California politics during that period, was among those listed as potential interviewees. Recognizing Helen Douglas's historicity, the Rockefeller Foundation agreed to a match to fund Helen Gahagan Douglas's interview with the proviso that the project include persons who had been associated with her.

The Helen Gahagan Douglas oral history unit, as it ultimately evolved, was comprised of Helen Douglas and twenty-five men and women who had known her as a friend and/or associate at important bench marks in her life--in college, the theater, and during and following her active political career.

Mrs. Douglas assisted in the selection of these representative persons whom she thought would provide useful and objective information about her activities throughout her life. In addition to the interviews in the Helen Gahagan Douglas Unit, other women in the series discussed her in their own interviews; former associates Paul Taylor and Judge Oliver Carter had talked about her previously in their oral histories.

During the years between 1974 when the project was initiated and its completion in 1981, inflation cut deeply into the initial grants, requiring the office to seek additional funding. To the rescue came members and friends of the Democratic Women's Forum in Los Angeles, an organization which Helen Douglas helped to establish in the mid-forties. Later the National Endowment and the Rockefeller Foundation gave additional grants.

The project has depended on the efforts of a number of persons. Interviewers were Amelia Fry, Eleanor Glaser, Fern Ingersoll, Ingrid Scobie, and Malca Chall. Catherine Scholten prepared the lengthy, much-emended Douglas transcript for typing, and also selected the photographs and appendix material. Teresa Allen helped develop the plan to keep track of the interviews from transcribing through final typing. Marie Herold was responsible for preparing the indexes, and for tying up the countless loose ends which are always present in long-term projects.

The material contained in these volumes and others in the California Women Political Leaders Oral History Project should provide students with fresh information and insights into the life and political and social milieu of Helen Douglas. Those seeking additional information will find it in the Helen Gahagan Douglas papers in the Carl Albert Congressional Research Center at the University of Oklahoma, and in the collections of Melvyn Douglas papers in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin and Indiana University. In this latter collection Ingrid Winther Scobie plans to deposit the tapes of interview she has conducted while preparing for her upcoming biography of Mrs. Douglas. The Roosevelt library also contains much source material on Helen Douglas, her friendship with the Roosevelts and other leading New Dealers, and her activities in the Democratic party.

Fortunately for historians these interviews in the Douglas unit were completed just prior to the recent deaths of Helen Gahagan Douglas, Albert Cahn, Charles Hogan, Alvin Meyers, and Walter Pick. The Regional Oral History Office is grateful for the financial support of the foundations and the friends of Helen Gahagan Douglas, and for the assistance of the hardworking staff, factors which have made possible this oral history project about an active and influential participant in an important era of American history.

Malca Chall, Project Director  
Women in Politics Oral History Project

Willa Baum, Department Head  
Regional Oral History Office

8 June 1981  
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On behalf of future scholars the Office wishes to thank the friends of Helen Gahagan Douglas who responded to the request for funds sponsored by the Los Angeles Democratic Women's Forum, especially Marie Melgaso and Elizabeth Snyder who spearheaded that effort. These contributions helped match the grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Rockefeller Foundation, thereby making possible the production of the Helen Gahagan Douglas Unit of the California Women Political Leaders Oral History Project.

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Women in Politics Oral History Project

HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS PROJECT

Juanita Terry Barbee

HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS'S OFFICE STAFF:  
WORK AND RELAXATION

An Interview Conducted by  
Fern Ingersoll  
in 1976

Underwritten by grants from:

National Endowment for the Humanities, Rockefeller Foundation,  
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JUANITA TERRY BARBEE





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## INTERVIEW HISTORY

One of the first people Evelyn Chavoor, administrative assistant to Helen Gahagan Douglas, suggested I talk to was Juanita Terry Barbee, who was a secretary in the Douglas congressional office. She has now retired to her home on the Maryland east shore after years of work in the offices of Jimmy Roosevelt, Hubert Humphrey, and Gus Hawkins. We talked on December 6, 1976 in the Capitol Hill office of Congressman Gus Hawkins where she was working on Mondays, helping him with his papers.

Although Mrs. Barbee is very soft-spoken, there is a glow of enthusiasm in what she says. Some weeks after our interview, she and Evelyn Chavoor lunched together, stimulating each other's memories and resulting in several additions to the Evelyn Chavoor transcript and a letter, appended to this transcript, concerning Helen Douglas's early contribution to the Negro community in which young Juanita Terry grew up. Their lunch together was one more example of the close relationship which existed among members of the Helen Gahagan Douglas staff and between the staff and specialists who advised on complicated issues, a relationship which has endured for many years.

Mrs. Barbee responded quickly to my additional questions when I sent the edited transcript for her approval. Since Helen Douglas wanted to see this transcript while she was writing her autobiography, Evelyn Chavoor took it to her when she was visiting. Attesting to the quality of their relationship, Mrs. Barbee said that Mrs. Douglas and Evelyn Chavoor might not always agree with her, but she felt they were not the kind of people to be offended by differing views.

Fern S. Ingersoll  
Interviewer-Editor

26 May 1978  
Takoma Park, Maryland





I HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS'S OFFICE STAFF: WORK AND RELAXATION

[Interview 1: December 4, 1976]

[begin tape 1, side A]

Problems of the First Negro Secretary of a White Congressperson

Ingersoll: How did you hear about the job opening for a secretary with Helen Gahagan Douglas, Mrs. Barbee?

Barbee: Well, that's a rather long story. To make it short, it really was as the result of my mother's activities. She was active with the Democratic party in California in Los Angeles, and had met Mrs. Douglas, of course, and knew the other people around her, and when Mrs. Douglas was thinking of making her office representative of the people of the district, she wanted to employ a Negro (I'll say Negro most of the time; I have a little difficulty with black). But anyway, she spread the word around that she was looking for someone, and two or three people were tested, and didn't seem to suit. It so happened at that time I was working in the Federal Building for one of the government agencies, and Florence Reynolds, who was Mrs. Douglas's secretary in the Los Angeles office, said, "What about Jessie Terry's daughter? I bet she'd like to go to Washington." So, she called me on the phone. "Juanita, you want to go to Washington?" I said, "Sure. Anywhere to get away from home for a while." She said Helen was looking for a secretary. I said, "I'm not a secretary. I can type, but I don't have any shorthand." She said, "Learn shorthand." [Laughs]

To make a long story short, that's how it happened. I got in touch with Evie [Chavoor] who interviewed me, and I took a fast brush-up course in shorthand, and was hired at the magnificent sum of \$200 a month, which was more than I was making. I was only making \$135, so that sounded real good.

Ingersoll: It sounded like a lot, probably.

Barbee: Yes.

Ingersoll: Did you have any qualms about coming to Washington at that time?

Barbee: I did in a way because I didn't know anyone here. I only knew one couple, so I had no friends here. I didn't know anything at all about the city, but I was just at that point in my life, I think, where I was prepared to make a change of some sort, and I figured, well, I'll give it a year, and if it doesn't work out I can always go back to the government. That's why I decided to do it. Well, it just opened up a whole career--not only for me, but actually for other Negroes up here on Capitol Hill, because at the time I came there were only two others working here in a professional capacity. One was Congressman [William] Dawson's secretary, and the other was Adam Clayton Powell's secretary.

Ingersoll: Was Congressman Dawson a Negro congressman?

Barbee: Yes, he was a Negro congressman from Illinois.

Ingersoll: So, these were both working for Negro congressman, and no other was working for a white congressperson.

Barbee: I was the first. Mrs. Douglas was the first to do it. She was discouraged, I understand in the beginning from doing it, but once she gets a bug in her head, she persists at it, and she decided, "Well, I'm going to do it anyway." They told her all about the problems I would have here, because this was a very segregated town, and she said, "Well, we'll work it out." So, I came. She had one young woman on her staff--I don't know if Evie told you this or not. One of her secretaries was a southerner I believe from South Carolina. She got very upset when she found out that I was coming, and she expressed her problem to Mrs. Douglas who thoroughly understood, but told her, "If you don't think you can stay and adjust, why we'll look for something else for you." So, it turned out that she left the staff. She was the only one, I think, that had any problem in accepting me. I had no problem because I had always worked on mixed staffs, and coming from California your orientation is entirely different. And so, I had some personal problems when I got here--not being able to eat where I wanted to eat, or go where I wanted to go. That kind of thing. The segregated pattern was something that was difficult. It prevailed even up here on the Hill. We were not permitted to eat in the cafeterias, or in the dining room.

Ingersoll: Was there some problem about eating in the cafeteria of the House of Representatives?

Barbee: Yes, that's right, at that time.



Ingersoll: What did you have to do then?

Barbee: For a long time I don't think Mrs. Douglas was aware of it. I wasn't one of those people who tried to make an issue of anything, except as the situation went on and had to be decided. We worked so hard I rarely had time to go out to lunch, anyway. [Laughs]

Ingersoll: A brown paper bag.

Barbee: That's right, or somebody would run down and get me a sandwich and I'd eat at the desk. But eventually Mrs. Douglas heard about it, and she took some steps to break it down. The thing that I never really understood was why either Powell or Dawson hadn't done something about that.

Ingersoll: Were they themselves able to eat in the dining room?

Barbee: Yes, they could, but it was a matter of their staffs.

Ingersoll: But neither of them did take any step.

Barbee: They didn't take any step until after Mrs. Douglas came and pushed.

Ingersoll: Do you remember anything about her pushing to make a change in that?

Barbee: I don't know what she did, but I guess she talked to whoever was running the show at that time.

Ingersoll: So, it was possible before the end of the time you were working here to eat in the dining room of the House of Representatives.

Barbee: Yes, and over on the Senate side-- You see I came here in December '47, and over on the Senate side Senator Paul Douglas of Illinois employed the first Negro staff person in his office, in '49, I guess it was. In '48 or '49. And he broke it down over there on the Senate side.

#### Working in Helen Gahagan Douglas's Office

Ingersoll: Do you remember anything about your first meetings with Helen Gahagan Douglas here in Washington?

Barbee: You know, I don't. I really don't. I had met her, of course, in Los Angeles.

Ingersoll: Oh, you had?

Barbee: Yes, during the various campaigns. I would go down to the headquarters and stuff envelopes, that kind of thing. Or else there'd be a house meeting of some kind where she would appear, and so I had met her to shake hands and that kind of thing. But, I was just overawed by her all the time anyway, even when I was in the office with her. I didn't have a great deal of contact because Evie took all of her personal correspondence and so forth. I was just sort of thrown in there, and began having to learn the routine of the office--with Evie's help, of course--but I never used my shorthand, nobody ever did dictate to me. Just, "Here's a letter, answer it. And Helen says so-and-so, and so-and-so." And you went to work--

Ingersoll: You put the letter together then with the ideas that Helen Gahagan Douglas fed you through Evie Chavoor.

Barbee: That's right. And so you had to get accustomed--you had to learn how she would express herself, and what her thinking was on certain things. But most important things Evie took care of. I did some of the case work, some of the routine correspondence, and form letters, and filing, and that sort of thing. But that first year, I was very green about the Hill, about the legislative branch, and so I was just sort of wide-eyed about it. You know, I just wish I had those letters I wrote to my mother the first year or two I was here because it was sort of a diary. Then gradually, as I got more accustomed to things, I stopped putting down my impressions and--

Ingersoll: Things become routine after a short time.

Barbee: Yes, after a short time. Some of those early letters I'm sure would bring back a lot of things to me that I have forgotten.

Ingersoll: Did either Evie Chavoor or Helen Gahagan Douglas make any attempt to help you find your way around the Hill and know what was important, and this sort of thing?

Barbee: Evie did to some extent, but she was kept so busy, because she was not only Helen's secretary but she was also her housekeeper, and her chauffeur, and everything. She lived with her, so she never had any time. I had one very good friend here--as I said, I knew one couple here who helped me outside of the office to meet people and get involved that way. The two secretaries of Powell and Dawson were extremely helpful--I could probably not

Barbee: have made it had it not been for them showing me the ropes.

Ingersoll: That would be so important when you came from so far away, and knew so few people.

Barbee: As a matter of fact, one of them, Maxienne Dargans, is still working here. She is on the Education and Labor Committee now. She was Powell's secretary. The other one, Christine Davis, retired either the year I did or the year before. We both retired about the same time. But from that beginning gradually others got courage enough to hire Negroes on their staffs, and this became almost a necessity as Negroes in their home districts began realizing their own political power and strength, and began insisting that they have more representation in employment and everything else. And others found out that buildings didn't fall down, and nothing really happened because I came to work, and they felt that they could do it too. So I have been very grateful that I had that opportunity, and very proud of Helen for having done it.

Ingersoll: It does seem that it was a very, very important first.

Barbee: I think it was. Especially when I look around now and see the employment opportunities that they have here on the Hill--all the way up the ladder it seems. It was quite something.

Ingersoll: To go back just a little bit to try and get something about Helen's style of work with her staff. You were to take the letters that she gave the ideas for, and write them. Then did they have to go back to her for her okay?

Barbee: Oh, yes. Then went back to her or Evie--generally Evie did that because she knew Helen's thinking. She was Helen's mind, and Helen was Evie's mind, that sort of thing. They were so close. So that Evie generally approved my work. If she thought it was all right, then it went on to Mrs. Douglas for signature. I didn't have to get involved in anything political or anything in policy making. I was purely a clerical assistant, and all that that entails. Some of the people that she drew around her to do research and advise her on certain aspects were really quite fine people--several of whom I'm still in close contact with.

Ingersoll: Oh really. Who are they?

Barbee: For instance, there was Sidney Bercovici, have you heard of her?

Ingersoll: I've heard her name.

Barbee: Her first name is Sidney. She came in to do some research



Barbee: with Helen. When I went over to work with James Roosevelt, she also came and did some work on his staff. So, we've been very close ever since.

Ingersoll: What was her particular specialty?

Barbee: Sidney was really in public relations, I guess you would say. She had good contacts with newspapers, and with people and organizations. She got involved actually through another person that Helen pulled in, Ann Hedgeman, who advised Helen a lot on civil rights, and fair employment practices. Sidney and Ann worked closely together in the civil rights field, so that was really how I became acquainted with the two of them.

Ingersoll: Did you work with them at all on that?

Barbee: No. Oddly enough, in none of the jobs that I've had have I ever been used as a civil-rights expert at all. And this has been very good because-- Well, first of all I am not active enough in the [Negro] community to give any opinion that would be representative. But I've been grateful to them that I have not been used as a race relations expert or whatever in any of these offices.

#### Helen Gahagan Douglas and the Negro Community

Ingersoll: Do you think that was a particular idea of Helen Gahagan Douglas's that you shouldn't be asked to do that kind of thing, but simply be yourself and do a good job, and just by doing that it would have a certain affect?

Barbee: I think that perhaps is so. With the kind of district she had, she had no need of my input--my mother would be the one she would talk to, and other well-known people in the community would advise Helen.\* [Laughs] That reminds me of a story that Sidney told me just recently, and I either didn't know it or had forgotten it. But it seems as though Helen, as with a good many people of her class and culture, had no intimate knowledge and contact with Negroes. You know, Negroes over here and whites over here, and

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\*A letter from Juanita Barbee to Fern Ingersoll, 4 April 1977, recounts how Helen Gahagan Douglas helped the Negro community to fight discrimination in defense plants, thus earning later support. See Appendix.



Barbee: I see their problems and I want to do something to help them. And I guess it was in connection with some of the civil-rights legislation she was trying to get through that she was invited to speak at a Negro church. There was a huge crowd there and they were enthusiastic and I suppose there was a lot of singing, and so forth. Helen got all keyed up, and after her grand introduction she strode up to the rostrum there and held her arms out and said, "I just love the Negro people." She had no idea that she had done anything, you see. She was completely overwhelmed by the whole occasion, and was spontaneous, and that's the way she felt--she just loved them.

Well, the people considered that to be patronizing, and from what I understand the whole audience reacted, and she could feel it. Well, she got herself out of it some way or another-- I don't know how she did that, but she won them back eventually before the evening was over, but afterwards she was discussing this with Sidney who had been in the audience, and asked what happened. And so Sidney then told her some of the facts of life, and from that point on she never made that kind of mistake again. She was a quick learner, a good learner. I think she's so remarkable because when you consider her beginnings and her contacts and her exposure and experience--

Ingersoll: So far away from so many of things that she championed later on.

Barbee: Yes, that's right, but what a wonderful person she is, and the strength that she displayed in going against the crowd so much.

Ingersoll: Certainly political expediency was not the important thing to her.

Barbee: It certainly was not. I look at what's happening today. The very same things that she was fighting on, almost a lone battle for, are the things we're still trying to get through today. The housing problem, for instance. I remember, I guess it was in the Eightieth Congress, when there was a housing bill on the floor that would have increased public housing and the whole thing, and it was killed. And if I remember rightly I wrote to my mother saying, "They lynched the housing bill today." I was in tears, and Helen was in tears, because the way it was done was so nasty. I think [Joseph W.] Martin was Speaker of the House then because there was a Republican, the House was Republican, and he absolutely refused to recognize her on the floor. She kept trying to get his attention, "Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker." And he just looked through her. It was the rudest action I've ever seen.

Ingersoll: All of you who had worked so hard must have felt so resentful of something like that.

- Barbee: We really were. I was just furious, and so when they defeated that bill we were all pretty heartbroken about it, but of course, it was very hard on her. She was so against the cost-of-living hike when she made her Market Basket speech. Evie and I did the shopping [laughs]. The story was that she had gone down to the grocery store personally, and bought those groceries. Although she gave us the money, we went on down and bought them.
- Ingersoll: You and Evie were the ones, keeping a very close track of things.
- Barbee: Yes. How effective that speech was, and later it was picked up by India Edwards who spoke about it at the [Democratic] National Convention, and by other people. And here we are still fighting the cost-of-living battle, the unemployment situation, and for certain civil rights still that have not come about. We're still fighting on those fronts.
- Ingersoll: For so many of those things that she felt were really so very, very important.
- Barbee: Of course, this is where it really began and this battle is still continuing, forty years later almost. And yet people like her who started something, even though they didn't accomplish it, they at least put a stone there for somebody to climb up on.
- Ingersoll: Yes, and we couldn't possibly be where we are now if it hadn't been for this cumulative effort begun by people like her.
- Barbee: I think of her, and I think of my last boss, Gus [Rep. Augustus F.] Hawkins in much the same way. They have been lonely warriors with so many--
- Ingersoll: They were good friends, weren't they?
- Barbee: They were-- No. I'll say yes and no. They were not really very close, and this is something that was neither one's fault actually. But there was a little resentment in the community about the fact that this glamorous actress should run for Congress in the district when we had qualified people who--
- Ingersoll: Oh, yes, that would be very natural.
- Barbee: Gus had been in the state legislature and he wanted to run for Congress, and a lot of people felt that he should, and he lived in the district; but it actually was the party, not so much Mrs. Douglas, that just said, "Well, you can run if you want to, but we won't support you because we're supporting Mrs. Douglas as our candidate." And that I think hurt Gus very much because he really worked hard for it.

Ingersoll: How did people, like your mother, feel about that?

Barbee: My mother was a Douglas fan. She felt that Mr. Hawkins was still young, and that he would have an opportunity maybe a little later on, but for the things that we wanted to accomplish, it probably was a good idea to have somebody who did have the backing and the contacts and so forth and so on. And so, once that was decided, my mother went on and worked for Helen without reluctance. And she worked hard for Gus to get reelected to the state legislature.

Ingersoll: How long was it after Helen Gahagan Douglas's running that Gus Hawkins did run and become a congressman?

Barbee: Oh, many years. There were [Rep. Sam] Yorty, and [Rep. Clinton D.] McKinnon and James Roosevelt.\* So it wasn't until '62 that Gus Hawkins got a chance to run.

Ingersoll: Was it at that point that you came to work in his office?

Barbee: Yes.

Ingersoll: As soon as he came in?

Barbee: As soon as he came in. Earlier Mrs. Douglas was defeated for the Senate, and that was such a traumatic time.

Ingersoll: We'll have to talk about that. Evie told me that you and she had driven together across the country to help with the Douglas campaign in California.

Barbee: Yes, we did.

The 1950 Campaign: Support from Averell Harriman and Mary McLeod Bethune

Ingersoll: So you went to California to help on that Douglas campaign. What sort of things did you do at that time?

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\*According to Evelyn Chavoor, "After Helen Douglas, there was Sam Yorty, then Jimmy Roosevelt, and after that Gus Hawkins. Redistricting took place after Sam Yorty and further redistricting after that. But when Jimmy Roosevelt ran and won, he had a lot of what was Helen's old district, plus other areas. Clinton McKinnon was a representative from another district in the southern part of the state." Checked by the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee.



Barbee: I was sort of—I don't know what you'd call it. I wasn't too close to the campaign, actually. I worked up in Helen's house some of the time answering constituent mail, and that sort of thing that came in there. Florence Reynolds was still in the Federal Building office. But Florence by that time was getting along in age and she only worked part-time, half-day, I think it was. And so, I also worked in that office. I was sort of away from the campaign, and yet, I was a little bit part of it too.

Ingersoll: Did you feel a part of the campaign?

Barbee: Oh yes. There were times when I'd go down and work in the headquarters. I can remember two or three things. Once, Averell Harriman came out to speak for Helen, and he needed somebody to type his speech, so I was drafted, went up to the hotel where he was. They had one of those typewriters with the extra large type. He used five-by-eight cards, and each paragraph on a card. So I was typing this, and he would scribble for a while and I would take and type it. He was so courteous and thoughtful. Somewhere along about one o'clock he said, "You haven't had any lunch, have you?" And I said, "No, I haven't." "I'll send down for something for you. What would you like?" So, he sent down for a chicken sandwich, or something. I worked all day with him, typing up this speech for him. And he thanked me graciously. And then a few days after he left, I got the loveliest letter from him. It was so thoughtful. Usually you did those things and the people went off and barely said thank you.

And then Mrs. Bethune, Mary McLeod Bethune, came out to speak. I traveled with her to see that she was sort of made comfortable, and whatever her needs were, to see that they were taken care of. So, I went to San Francisco, and to San Diego with her. And, as a matter of fact, she stayed at our house. We had a large house, and my mother was one of these people who made everyone feel welcome and at home. At that time, you see, Negroes couldn't stay in hotels. You'd ask somebody, "Do you know anybody in Los Angeles where I can stay while I'm there?" That's the way it was done. Mrs. Bethune had met my mother before, and when she said she was coming out, she said "I don't want to stay with anybody but Jessie Terry." So, I had to relinquish my room. And not only that, but I had a chance to go around with her, which was quite an experience, because she was an exceptional person.

Ingersoll: I think of her as mainly an educator. I didn't realize that she was politically oriented. Was it just for Helen Gahagan Douglas, or was she a politically-oriented woman otherwise?

Barbee: She was a smart woman. She became a Democrat because she believed that they were the ones who were going to help her accomplish what



Barbee: she wanted to accomplish. So she made herself available to help where help was needed, particularly getting out the Negro vote. And people had so much respect for her that she was quite a help. She got her pound of flesh, though. [Laughs]

Ingersoll: Do you remember any particular incidents in connection with her speaking for Helen Gahagan Douglas?

Barbee: Not anything, any particular incident. I do know that she captured the crowd. And I feel she was responsible for getting votes for Helen. She was really something.

#### Helen Gahagan Douglas's Advisers

Ingersoll: Was she ever used as an adviser in Helen's policymaking?

Barbee: Not that I can recall. I don't think they were that close, at all. But then Helen had pretty good instincts. There were people here in Washington at that time who were holdovers from the Roosevelt era--the "black cabinet" we called them at that time. They held spots in agencies and liaison really with the minorities. They were the minority specialists of one kind or another, so most of them were qualified to be other things, too. These people were sort of a little nucleus around here of brains and ideas, and people drew on them for necessary guidance. Ann Hedgeman, for instance, whom I mentioned was--I don't remember what her title was. Assistant secretary, or under secretary--It must have been assistant secretary of HEW. What did they call it, it wasn't HEW at that time, it was the Federal Security Administration, wasn't that it? I think it was the Federal Security Administration. It was before HEW became a cabinet post.

Ingersoll: Is Ann Hedgeman a Negro?

Barbee: Yes.

Ingersoll: And Sidney Bercovici?

Barbee: She's not, no, but Ann is.

Ingersoll: Were there others? I was going to ask you if there were others whom Helen particularly drew on in her civil rights programs.

Barbee: There was Elmer Henderson. And then, of course, she did talk to Powell and Dawson who were there. Elmer Henderson was Dawson's man on the committee, but he had filed a very important civil

Barbee: rights suit that went to the Supreme Court.

Ingersoll: When you say "on the committee," would that be a civil rights committee?

Barbee: No, the Government Operations Committee. Mr. Dawson ultimately became chairman of that committee. But Elmer's suit was against one of the railroads, and it was the one that broke down the discrimination in travel. I can't--my mind is so blank around that, I know there were other people that Helen talked to. It's been so many years now, and many of them wandered away into other things.

Ingersoll: How would she talk to them? Was it usually a matter, do you think, of telephone conversations, or was it a matter of her going to see them, or a social gathering at home?

Barbee: A social gathering at home sometimes, or she'd have them come into the office for conferences, and that kind of thing. But she'd have a lot many times in her own home. I wasn't involved in this because this was high-level stuff, so I wasn't always there. But many times she would ask them, for instance, when she had to make a speech in the civil rights area--"Draft up something for me. Let me look it over." And then they would draft up something, and she would make her corrections, put it in her own style, and so forth, but using basically their ideas. She did one very important study with the help of some of these people, and I'm not sure, but I think Ann was involved in this. This was a study of the Negro soldiers.

Ingersoll: Oh, yes, I've heard about that and read parts of it. That was a very important speech.

Barbee: A very important thing, and she had some good help on that.

Ingersoll: I wanted to ask you if you were involved in that in any way?

Barbee: No, I wasn't involved in it. That was completely out of my sphere. I'm not sure. It seems to me there was somebody over in the War Department who worked with her on this.

Ingersoll: I think that was something that took a great deal of research to get the information which had never been tabulated in a meaningful way.

Barbee: That's right.

Ingersoll: That was a very important thing.

Barbee: We thought it was.

Ingersoll: I also read a very interesting speech that she made, probably before you came, because I think it was in 1945, at the time when the DAR was being very picky and choosy about whom of what race they would let use Constitution Hall. And it was really a very beautiful speech that she made, saying that she felt that the DAR should not have tax exemption as long as they took the stand that they did. Even though her grandmother had been a member of the DAR in Ohio, and she had always had great respect for the DAR, she felt that at the present time they were acting very much against the more basic principles that the DAR had stood for in the past. And her grandmother had told her about one of the very first soldiers to fall in the Revolution, who was a Negro. I thought that was a very beautiful speech.\*

Barbee: Yes. I don't think I ever read that. Or if I did it was a long time ago, I don't remember.

Ingersoll: I'll send you a xerox of that.

Barbee: I surely would. I have the thing on the Negro soldier, but I don't have any of her speeches.

Ingersoll: This was something that was in Evie's memorabilia of Helen Gahagan Douglas.

Barbee: I wonder if she put it in the Record.

Ingersoll: Yes, I'm quite sure that it was printed in the Congressional Record. That was the part that I have. But that was certainly one of the very important things to her: in the very beginning to create an atmosphere and law where everybody could have equal opportunities.

Barbee: That's right. Her husband--have you met Mrs. Douglas?

Ingersoll: No, I'm looking forward to it. I realize she's in New York now, but I'll talk to her in the next few months.

Barbee: Well, her husband is equally as fine a person. He's a warm--just a wonderful man. They're a good pair. I was a little in awe of Helen. In the first place, she was the star, just somebody I'd never had any notion that I would ever meet. She's so

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\*"The Spirit of the Revolution: Equal Opportunity for All."  
Speech in the House of Representatives, 18 October 1945. See Appendix.



- Barbee: dynamic that you just sort of are in awe of her until you get to know her very well. And it wasn't really until after I stopped working for her, and was no longer in an employer/employee relationship that I considered her a friend.
- Ingersoll: Oh, really. How did that relationship grow for you then?
- Barbee: I don't know. We haven't had very much personal contact since then, but we just corresponded on occasions, and I think it happened really in a social setting. She was down here once, and got some of the old gang together. We just had this wonderful time that evening because there I could talk to her on a more or less equal level. She has the ability not only of expressing herself and her own ideas, but she also listens. She has the ability to do that, and it was the first time that I felt that I had anything to say that was worthwhile for her to listen to. I don't know what we were discussing that night, but all of us were involved in this. I felt a closeness to her that night.
- Ingersoll: And it was a relaxed kind of evening for all of you probably.
- Barbee: That's right. I know Evie was going to be married, we were all going to go up there to Helen's house--she invited me to come along and be her guest. The plans were changed for that so I've never been up there, but she's asked me any number of times to come up. And maybe one of these days I will. I drop her a Christmas card and that sort of thing--we sort of keep in touch, really through Evie. And once in a while, while I was working and she was still getting requests from people to do certain things, I was one of her sources on the Hill for information, or other kinds of assistance.

Helen Gahagan Douglas's Need for Evelyn Chavoor

- Ingersoll: Do you think there was ever very much resentment on the staff about the closeness between Helen and Evie Chavoor? Did other people feel left out at all?
- Barbee: I don't think so, no. Everyone realized that Helen just simply had to have somebody like Evie, who was completely unselfish, who was willing to say, "I have no other life, but to do what this woman wants."
- Ingersoll: She really did do that, didn't she?
- Barbee: Yes, she did. So Evie was just a further extension of Helen and



Barbee: people realized that, and so I don't know if there was ever any resentment of that sort. I think it may have been the other way around, that people wished that Evie would have more personal life of her own. Of course, she's quite a talented person herself.

Ingersoll: That's very easy to see.

Barbee: They felt that perhaps she was overlooking opportunities to be her own person, but her loyalties to Mrs. Douglas were such that she would never--

Ingersoll: She told me that people have said to her, "How could you be such a slave?" And she said she never thought of it that way. She said, "It was just the perfectly natural thing for me to do, nothing else, during that period."

Barbee: I was just thinking about one of the funny happenings during the senatorial campaign. I don't know why I was staying overnight at the Douglasses' house. Well, it was difficult getting back and forth, because she lived way up in Hollywood Hills and I lived on the eastside of Los Angeles. I didn't have a car, and so evidently we worked late at the house that night, and Helen said, "Why don't you stay the night? Evie and I have to go to San Diego tomorrow and you'll be here." We worked very late, and I suppose it was one or two o'clock in the morning before we finally stumbled to bed, and we had to get up at five in order to get over to Burbank in order to catch the plane--the regular scheduled flight to go down there. Well, we were all exhausted, and finally I was the first one to awaken. I looked at the clock, and lo and behold it was after five, and Evie was still asleep.

[end tape 1, side A; begin tape 1, side B]

So we got Helen up. We rushed frantically around getting everything together, and Evie was on the phone trying to get some kind of transportation down there. We had to charter a special plane, and fortunately they were only about an hour late. But, the campaign was so intense then. The hours were so long, and when you think of California, and the amount of territory that has to be covered, it's just--

Ingersoll: Staggering really.

Barbee: Yes, it's staggering. Some places are almost impossible to get into, so Helen rented a helicopter and went into places like that in order to make time and be able to get to areas where she thought it was necessary in the Central Valley area, and so forth. I still don't quite know what happened in that campaign. I do know of course the things that Nixon did, and there's no

- Barbee: need for me to go over that story, everybody knows it. It hurt an awful lot, but of course involved there too was the fact that she was a woman, and there were some people who simply were not going to vote for a woman senator. Plus the fact that she was a liberal and there were these pockets of extreme conservatism, and they still exist. The Korean situation had people upset--that happened, unfortunately, just at the wrong time. Because I think maybe we might have at least made a better showing if that had not intervened, and then the business of the communists, and all that went on. And then, of course, the money.
- Ingersoll: There were so many of the moneyed interests who would have been able to thrive with Nixon's sort of politics better than with Helen Gahagan Douglas's.
- Barbee: Certainly. Than with Helen's, exactly. So, they sent him out with the money to defeat her very, very successfully.
- Ingersoll: I've read some of the correspondence that Evie had in her papers of people who wrote to Helen afterwards--people who had worked with her. They just felt they had lost so very much in her losing the election.
- Barbee: The end of the world. I have a picture--a clipping from a newspaper. It happened to catch me and some one of the other workers, and I don't remember whether Helen is there--yes, Helen's in that picture, and she's smiling it seems to me. And I'm looking doleful, and Mrs. [Roz] Wiener [Wyman] has tears streaming down her face. And I think the caption went something like, "Helen Gahagan Douglas Consoles Her Staff," or something to the effect. We were heartbroken, but she was still strong.
- Ingersoll: Was that really the way it was?
- Barbee: Yes, she consoled us all. Those who were around her, like Ed Lybeck and the campaign people, they knew pretty well that she wasn't going to win--they were old politicians, and they can sense it. But we who were Indians, we just knew she was going to win. And the fact that she didn't was killing. For many of us it was our first political campaign and to have to go through a loss like that was really something. And particularly to somebody like Nixon! [Laughs] I've never gotten over my hatred of him really. I think perhaps he's the only human being I've ever hated in my life, and I hated him. I guess I've softened a little bit, I don't hate him as much now.
- Ingersoll: But this is a very strong feeling.
- Barbee: Yes, a very strong feeling that I'll never get over feeling.



Comparison of Four Political Personalities

Ingersoll: What sort of a difference would you feel that working with Helen Gahagan Douglas made in your life, in your career, as the years have gone by?

Barbee: None of this would have happened if it hadn't been for her. The experience with her was something, as well as the experience of meeting so many people on a level where I never would have expected to meet them. People who were policymakers; people who made the wheels go around. People who were idea people. I am not very articulate about this, but--

Ingersoll: Would Helen introduce you to these people, and they--

Barbee: Yes, yes. Of course, if they came to the office. Occasionally she would have small gatherings at home, and Evie and I would pass canapes around. We would see that everybody--we were hostesses, to take some of the work off her, but we were included as well.

Ingersoll: You were included in the conversation as well as the canape passing.

Barbee: Included in the conversation. Yes, that's right, so that we were just like part of the family. I can remember going over sometimes, we'd get into a more relaxed evening playing charades and that sort of thing.

Ingersoll: Oh, really. Was this one of Helen's ways of relaxing?

Barbee: Yes. She had a sister who was a very dynamic, outgoing person, fun loving. And whenever she would come down, it would be a good time had by all. I met many people who were well known in government. I had very little social contact with the Negro community here in Washington, unless they happened to be in some way involved in government. I never was particularly interested in socializing anyway, even at home; but I was talking to my husband recently, about the fact that all of my friends were involved in some way or other either up here on the Hill in the political arena or else they were in the federal agencies in some capacity or other. A few were associated with the university--Howard University, primarily. Other than that, I just didn't know anybody. [Laughs] But she made it possible for me to meet many of these people, and then by continuing my stay up here on

Barbee: the Hill, after she left, I went immediately to work for Hubert Humphrey. And I stayed with him six years. And then--

Ingersoll: Were you on the secretarial staff for Hubert Humphrey?

Barbee: Yes. I was his case worker. What they call case worker. I took care of people's problems, which is another whole thing which I would love to talk about sometime. It's been interesting to compare the four different personalities that I've worked for. After Jimmy Roosevelt took over my home district, he was here a couple of years and then decided to make some staff changes, and it was through Evie that I got on his staff.

Ingersoll: I see. That was from Hubert Humphrey's office you went to--

Barbee: To Jimmy Roosevelt's. But almost the same people who worked for Helen were working for Jimmy.

Ingersoll: They were?

Barbee: Yes. The Lybecks, Fayga Berkowitz, and Sidney Bercovici came back to do some helping, and other people, because he was another person who was able to draw people around him with ideas, and experience, and all that sort of thing. So that I almost picked up where I left off with Helen. Working with Humphrey, of course, I had different kinds of contacts. But I was able to get back then into the California scene, and some of the old contacts that I had made before that time. And when Gus [Hawkins] came in, I wanted to come to work for Gus then, because I felt I was at the point where I had the experience that could be extremely helpful to him.

Ingersoll: You worked as case worker for Hubert Humphrey, and then for Jimmy Roosevelt?

Barbee: I was--well, he called me his administrative assistant, but I ran his office. By that time I had--I don't think I knew any more, because I felt like I was being thrown into something where I'd had no experience--running an office. But I agreed to take it on, so I did that. And I became to him almost like Chavoor was to Helen Douglas, which was another long story we won't go into. But anyway, it was a grueling--how long was I with him? Six years, I guess.

Ingersoll: And then Gus Hawkins. Was it the same position with Gus Hawkins as with Jimmy Roosevelt?

Barbee: Yes, I was his administrative assistant.



Ingersoll: You were going to compare those four personalities. That would be interesting.

Barbee: Yes. Well, they all had a certain dynamism. Humphrey, of course, is gregarious. As you see him, that's just exactly what he is. He is thoroughly outgoing. None of these people except Gus Hawkins ever had any really substantive involvement, so to speak, with the Negro community, but how they learned to involve themselves is something that is quite interesting. Humphrey, of course, just accepts people all across the board. He's a friend to everybody. And we had some wonderful times, because we were very much like a big family there. Humphrey was a hard worker. I was going to say I never worked any harder for anybody in my life, but I did, for Jimmy Roosevelt. But, there was something about Humphrey's handling of his staff that was a little different. There really was much more of a closeness among his staff people. We did things together. We picnicked together. We visited one another's homes, and that sort of thing. There was a very real communication there, and the Humphreys and their children were always part of it. So that you worked like a dog six days a week, but his appreciation of what you did was so genuine, just so outgoing, that you felt he could walk on you and it was all right. You just had that kind of feeling about him. Roosevelt was a hard worker himself. But he was--he and Helen had some similarities--as my husband calls it, they're both sort of "aristocrats."

Ingersoll: That's right. They did come from more similar backgrounds, didn't they?

Barbee: That's right. So that when they demand something of you, it's no more than you're expected to do, you see. I didn't feel it so much with Helen because Evie got the brunt of that; but with Roosevelt, you were expected to do personal things for him. You were expected to take his car, see that it got clean, pick him up at the airport. His wife wanted you to answer her correspondence, this kind of thing that you hear a lot of secretaries talk about. But this was something that he just expected. I can never forget [laughs]--one day, he was signing mail. He had this way of--wanting the whole staff to stay until he came back from the floor, committee meetings, or wherever, and the mail was on his desk and he wanted you to gather around while he signed it. He would talk to you--this was in effect a staff meeting. But some girls who had husbands and other responsibilities wanted to get home.

So, he was using a pen like this, and it kind of spluttered and he got a little bit of ink on his finger there, so he just held up his hand like that, and somebody ran around and got a

- Barbee: kleenex and wiped it off for him. This was a normal procedure. He didn't think anything of it. He didn't think anything of calling me up after I had gotten home, and saying, "Oh, so-and-so's coming in on a plane. I wondered if you could run over to the airport and pick him up." Ultimately my husband put a stop to that. He told him, firmly, "My wife is not a chauffeur."
- Ingersoll: But he would expect it. Was Helen at all like that?
- Barbee: Helen wasn't like that. She demanded certain things, and she expected them to be done, but she was more reasonable, I think, because, I guess being a woman, she had some idea you had your own personal things to take care of sometimes. But if she were involved in a project, then it was all-hands-on-deck, and everybody dropped what they were doing to enlist until it was over. But she was never unreasonable. Mr. Roosevelt was, but it was because he was completely unconscious of the fact that he was unreasonable.
- Ingersoll: He didn't know the lives that other people were involved in.
- Barbee: Yes. That's it. He was a perfectly sweet guy. Everybody loved him. I had no resentment against him.
- Ingersoll: You said that because Helen was a woman perhaps she understood the lives of other people. Do you have any other feeling after working for three men, and Helen Gahagan Douglas, a woman, that her being a woman influenced in any other ways the way she dealt with her staff?
- Barbee: I don't think so. You see, we were a very small staff, actually, here in the Washington office. By the time I came in, there was a young man, Walter; I think he was a cousin.
- Ingersoll: Oh, Walter Pick.
- Barbee: Walter Pick, yes. And there was Evie. And then there was this other gal, Mary whatever her name is, who left. And for a long time there were just the three of us. Evie, Walter, and I. Other people would come in on a volunteer basis, but we were the main staff for a while. I was low man on the totem pole, so there wasn't any pressure or strain or anything of that kind, as far as the staff was concerned. And there was no special way that she treated us.
- Ingersoll: Then the staff must have grown, didn't it?
- Barbee: It grew slightly, but I don't think she ever really enlarged the



- Barbee: staff back here. The basic staff still stayed small. We didn't have much money at that time to run an office on, either.
- Ingersoll: No, I understand that the representatives had a very, very small staff allowance.
- Barbee: Evie was constantly being cut in her salary in order for Helen to be able to pay somebody to do something, a special job. Evie was the one who did that kind of thing. I don't remember much about the Los Angeles office. I know Florence ran that office practically by herself. Then there was the political office which was active, of course, during campaign times. But you see I was only with Mrs. Douglas the two-and-a-half, three years. I came in late '47, and she ran for reelection in '48. So, I had all of the '48, '49 and '50 with her. Three years. So, during that time, our staff was never large.
- Ingersoll: Can you say anything about the feeling among the people on Helen Douglas's staff. As you compare it with the feeling in the office of Jimmy Roosevelt or Hubert Humphrey, or Gus Hawkins, was there any difference really, anything significant in the way people worked together?
- Barbee: Yes, there was. But I think part of that had to do with size. Where you have large staffs you have many conflicts of personalities. Then there's a real power competition. On Humphrey's staff we ran into this power--wanting to get close to the boss, because while Senator Humphrey made himself almost completely accessible to anyone of the staff who wanted to get to him, there were buffers, and others who wanted to be buffers and to be first with him. And there was some staff turmoil there. As a matter of fact before I went to work for Mr. Roosevelt, Senator Humphrey asked me to be his office manager because he was thinking of making a change, and I said, "I'm sorry, sir, but I don't have the experience. And even if I had it, I wouldn't want the headaches." At that time he had some eighteen people, and that was a pretty large staff. I didn't want that kind of hassle.
- Ingersoll: That would be entirely different from just the three on Helen's staff.
- Barbee: But then Roosevelt's staff, that was again a small staff. I think he had gotten rid of everybody on there except two people, so that I was able to bring in people I thought I could work with, or could work together. And so, we had pretty good relations on that staff. We had a good working staff. We got a lot of volunteer help, too, by virtue of the fact that because he was who he was, people wanted to come in and do something. And then at that time the Political Science Foundation, I think it is,

- Barbee: began the system of assigning interns to work in the various national offices. We had a series of very bright young men (I think they were all men) at one time or other coming in to work for three or four months. And some of them were able to make input into what we were trying to do.
- Ingersoll: Were you speaking of Helen Gahagan Douglas's staff, or Roosevelt's staff?
- Barbee: This was Roosevelt's staff. I was just comparing the two staffs. We had more people on Roosevelt's.
- Ingersoll: Were there volunteers who came in and worked on Helen Gahagan Douglas's staff, too?
- Barbee: Yes, there were volunteers who came in, essentially at campaign time when there would have to be a lot of envelope stuffing. But then, of course, the people--those whose brains she picked, they were generally volunteers. They would volunteer their time, too.
- Ingersoll: And they would come in for a matter of days, would they?
- Barbee: Days, a couple of weeks, or maybe a month or so, and work directly with her on a particular project in which she was interested. There was some lady, Lucy Kramer--
- Ingersoll: I've talked with Lucy Kramer, the economist, on the telephone and I expect to talk to her for a longer period of time. She worked on that Market Basket speech, didn't she?
- Barbee: Yes, she did. Lucy's a delightful person. I think you'll enjoy talking with her. And oddly enough, I had practically forgotten about Lucy, and just this past Sunday I was talking to a friend of my husband's who lives down in Arkansas--he's on the staff of the university down there--and he said, "I have met a young woman who says her mother knows you. Her mother used to work for Helen Gahagan Douglas." And I said, "Who was it?" He said, "I can't remember her name, but the next time I talk to her I'll let you know." So he evidently got in touch with the girl and called me right back about fifteen minutes later. He said her name was Lucy Kramer. I said, "For Pete's sake. I must get in touch with Lucy." I remember her. She was married to Felix Cohen who was a very, very well-known man in his field. He was involved with the Indians, an extremely interesting and very sweet man.
- Ingersoll: You must have been rather close to Lucy when you were all working on that Market Basket speech.
- Barbee: Yes, we were. I was very close to Lucy then. She's just the



Barbee: kind of person that you warm up to, anyway.

Ingersoll: I understand that that was a time when you all worked very late nights to get the whole thing put together and get it all rechecked and--

Barbee: Yes.

Ingersoll: The numbers were all so important, weren't they.

Barbee: Yes. And then to have it be delivered on the floor to an almost empty chamber!

Ingersoll: Oh, was it really? That must have been heartbreaking after all your work.

Barbee: It reminds me of another experience when we worked with Hubert Humphrey. There were eighty-five legal-size pages to his speech on tax loopholes. This was one of his projects, he wanted to close all the tax loopholes. He worked night and day on this speech, and we worked to one and two o'clock in the morning collating it. And the day that he made it, there were three or four people sitting on the floor. But this is the thing that they will do frequently to embarrass you.

Ingersoll: Do you think people did that to embarrass Mrs. Douglas?

Barbee: I think so. I do think so. You know, while she was well-liked and well-respected, there were a lot of old-line people, Democrats around here, who thought she was going too far on too many things they didn't support anyway.

Ingersoll: Did they make this quite clear?

Barbee: I think they made it quite clear to her. Yes. [Laughs] Certainly on votes, for instance.

Ingersoll: By just not appearing in the House for one thing?

Barbee: By not appearing for one thing when she spoke. And on their votes in opposition to--

Ingersoll: Would they come into the office and say this sort of thing?

Barbee: I don't know if they'd do that, but I dare say Evie has told you that perhaps they would pat her on the back, "Nice little girl, but I'm not going to vote with you." Then there was, of course, this presumed rivalry between her and Clare Booth Luce, because

- Barbee: they were so philosophically opposite to one another. Both of them actresses, and both were glamorous people, good looking and all of that. I don't know who did it, the press or who, but they--I think they tried to make the rivalry more intense than it ever was.
- Ingersoll: That would be a natural for the press to grab hold of.
- Barbee: Yes. There was another woman--there were several women in Congress at that time. Was Esther Murray in Congress? No, Esther Murray wasn't in Congress.
- Ingersoll: Esther Murray tried but didn't make it, didn't she?
- Barbee: She tried. She never did make it.
- Ingersoll: Margaret Chase Smith, was she as early as that?
- Barbee: She might have been, but she was in the Senate. I don't think she was ever in the House. Oh, Paul Douglas's wife, whose name was Emily. She was also in the House. There were two Mrs. Douglasses in the House at the same time.
- Ingersoll: So there weren't many women, but at least there was a handful.
- Barbee: No, there weren't many women. I think there was some Republican-- Oh, Mrs. Bolton [Frances P.], yes. She was there, she was sort of the dean of the women, because she had been there longer than any of the others, if I recall. But, it was an interesting era. All of them have been interesting. Of course, we were at the tail end of the Truman era, and the things that he was trying to accomplish, but the people had been through the war, they were a little tired of problems. They wanted to get back to so-called "normalcy", so that when people like Helen and Paul Douglas--
- Ingersoll: Wouldn't let the problems lie.
- Barbee: Yes, goading them to do something. There was a little resentment, you see, about it. And I think maybe that, too, might have contributed to Helen's defeat for the Senate.
- Ingersoll: How did Helen treat this resentment? Do you have any indications of that?
- Barbee: No, I really wasn't that close at all. I think she could have continued to be the representative from the district; that would have kept on probably until the time that Gus Hawkins came in. If she'd wanted to stay there, she could probably have continued

Barbee: to stay there. After that time, they had reapportioned the district so many times they finally carved out a place for him--for Hawkins.

Ingersoll: Yes, and that was probably what naturally should have evolved. Maybe it should have come sooner.

Barbee: Yes. I think so.

Ingersoll: It certainly should have come at that point.

Barbee: That was the time for it.  
[end tape 1, side B]

Helen Gahagan Douglas as Legislator

[begin tape 2, side A]

Ingersoll: There was something I wanted to ask you about before, concerning lobbying and legislation and that sort of thing. Evie Chavoor told me that it was a rather common thing with Helen that when someone came in with a concern of their own and she recognized the importance of this concern, believed in it, she would not only support them but would often draw them in to do more work to make this concern reflected in legislation. Was that part of your experience?

Barbee: Yes. What I meant to develop earlier, the very first thing, was the great ability which she had to formulate legislation and to build up support for it, and this was the great attribute she had which I think she shared with Eleanor Roosevelt, of picking a social issue and carrying it to the public and to the Congress so that it would have a chance for consideration. When she was lost to the Congress we didn't have many left like her. Wayne Morse, George Norris, Senator [Robert F.] Wagner were people of that kind. There are not many in the Congress who know how to pick up an issue and carry it to the public to get progress on it today. She had that kind of ability, and what a great tragedy it was to lose her from the Congress.

Ingersoll: Well, thank you very much for these insights, Mrs. Barbee.

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GUSTUS F. HAWKINS  
21ST DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

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EDUCATION AND LABOR

SUBCOMMITTEES:  
RACIAL OPPORTUNITIES, CHAIRMAN  
GENERAL EDUCATION  
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ACCOUNTS  
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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, D.C. 20515**

April 4, 1977

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CHARLES E. KNOX  
SPECIAL ASSISTANT

Dear Fern:

This is the little footnote to our conversation that I promised to send you.

Back in the 30s and 40s my mother was very active in the Democratic Party and our home was a sort of headquarters or meeting house for candidates, campaign workers, and the like. Many strategic conferences have been held around our breakfast room table over scrambled eggs, biscuits, and coffee.

Recently, while reminiscing with a friend who once lived with us for many years, I mentioned the interview I had had with you concerning Helen Gahagan Douglas, and she brought up an incident with which I was unfamiliar since I was not at home during the time it allegedly took place. I say "allegedly" because her memory is somewhat hazy as to details and I have not been able to verify it with anyone I believe logically would have been involved, such as Gus Hawkins.

It had to do with the rampant discrimination in the employment and upgrading of Negroes in defense plants on the West Coast. Under threat of a massive march on Washington organized by A. Phillip Randolph, foremost Negro labor leader of the time, President Roosevelt was compelled to issue an Executive Order prohibiting such discrimination in defense plants and shipyards under contract to the federal government. I don't remember whether this took place before Pearl Harbor during the "arsenal of democracy" period or later, but at any rate the Order was flagrantly disregarded by those companies, especially the shipyards. The situation became so bad that efforts to bring it to Roosevelt's attention were made but were always blocked at a lower level.

According to my friend, a conference was held in our home by several prominent Negroes, such as those heading the local NAACP, Urban League, politicians, civil rights workers, and the like. At that time Helen was, I believe, national committeewoman for the Democratic Party, and her closeness to the Roosevelts, particularly Mrs. R., was well known. Someone suggested that perhaps she would be the best person to get Roosevelt's ear. She was contacted, agreed to carry the message, and either got to the President direct or to Mrs. Roosevelt. In any event, a second Order eventually was issued and the plants forced to comply. This action on Helen's part certainly contributed to the support she attained and retained in the Negro community during her years as a Member of Congress.

(Not printed at Government expense)

# Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 79<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

## The Spirit of the Revolution: Equal Opportunity for All

SPEECH  
OF

HON. HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 18, 1945

Mrs. DOUGLAS of California. Mr. Speaker, I have today regretfully introduced a bill to condition the tax exemption accorded to the Daughters of the American Revolution on their not denying the commercial use or rental of Constitution Hall by reason of race, creed, color, or national origin.

Remember what is inscribed on the Statue of Liberty, given us by France:

Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to break free,

The wretched refuse of your teeming shore,  
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed, to me:

I lift my lamp beside the golden door.

The golden door is this democracy; this democracy that has grown up from 13 weak, sparsely populated colonies to the most powerful nation in the world. Today this democracy will be tested as never before in its history. If we meet that test we will give moral leadership to the peoples of the earth.

We cannot fail if we draw our source from the principles which have withstood the years and have carried us so far. We cannot fail if we are true to the spirit of our great Revolution. Our platform then and our platform now must be the same if we are to succeed in this perilous hour of mankind. True, we have never quite fulfilled the promise, but we have struggled toward it and we have come a long way.

We must now fulfill that promise.

The words sing out today as they did when in 1776 they were drafted by Thomas Jefferson:

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We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.

One can be justly proud to be a descendant of those who fought in this famous Revolution because it gave birth to this great Declaration, to the Constitution, to the Bill of Rights; yes, and to the pledge of allegiance to the flag: "one nation indivisible, with liberty and justice for all," which we and our children offered daily not only as a pledge but as a prayer whenever we gathered in these last terrible years.

Yes; one can be proud. As a child, I fed on that pride. My grandmother was an active member of the Daughters of the American Revolution from the State of Ohio. Much of the joy of her life came from her association with that organization. I remember one of the stories she used to tell of one of the first men who died in the Revolution—Crispus Attucks. He was a Negro.

One can be justly proud that those before them in direct line helped lay the foundation for this society of free men. But this pride is meaningless if the spirit and word is lost.

It is not easy to be free men, for to be free you must afford freedom to your neighbor, regardless of race, color, creed, or national origin, and that, sometimes, for some, is very difficult. Freedom is not won on the battlefields. The chance for freedom is won there. The final battle is won or lost in our hearts and minds.

No; freedom is not easy, but it is infinitely precious.

We cannot legislate equality, but we can legislate, and we must legislate, as free men, equal opportunity for all.





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HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS PROJECT

Rachel Bell

HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS AND FOREIGN POLICY

An Interview Conducted by  
Fern Ingersoll  
in 1977

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## INTERVIEW HISTORY

While Helen Gahagan Douglas was making constant and sometimes difficult decisions on foreign policy legislation, Rachel Bell was performing a unique role as director of the International Legislation Information Service which facilitated the exchange of information between various groups in the United States interested in foreign policy issues, and between these groups and members of Congress. Evelyn Chavoor said, "Rachel was often in and out of our office with useful, informative material."

Our interview took place on March 30, 1977 in the living room of Mrs. Bell's townhouse in Georgetown, part of Washington, D.C. The Japanese lantern in the garden beyond the living room windows lent an appropriate international atmosphere. Flowers on painted wall-plaques and needlepoint pillows reflected her creativity, while a beautiful carved table and chairs gave an air of solidity.

I arrived at eleven o'clock on a sparkling spring morning. A former colleague had called her just a few minutes earlier inviting her to go off at 1:00 for an afternoon in the country. She looked over the outline I had prepared and refreshed her thoughts by looking at the Blue Book--the record of Helen Gahagan Douglas and her opponent, Richard Nixon, from the Congressional Record. "It makes you mad even now to look at some of this," Mrs. Bell said, as she glanced through the pages of the Blue Book. In a very few minutes, we began the interview.

Because of illness and an impending heart operation, Mrs. Bell was not able to go over the transcript. With her approval I have edited very lightly, adding words, when necessary, in square brackets.

Fern S. Ingersoll  
Interviewer-Editor

26 May 1978  
Takoma Park, Maryland





## II HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS AND FOREIGN POLICY

[Interview 1: March 30, 1977]  
[begin tape 1, side A]

Rachel Bell's Liaison Work Between Congress and Foreign Policy  
Oriented Organizations

Ingersoll: Mrs. Bell, Evelyn Chavoor told me that you were a person I really should talk to, because you were so active as a lobbyist on various foreign policy issues during the period that Helen Gahagan Douglas was in Congress. Would that be a fair indication of what you were at that time?

Bell: Yes and no. I was never much of a personal lobbyist. I did help to organize support, and also at times opposition, for issues before the Congress. But I was never exactly what is known on the Hill as a lobbyist, because I actually directed the work of organizations and other people. When I first came to Washington, I went first to the Hill to work with a group of senators who were interested in the passage in the Congress of a resolution which would suggest and endorse an organization of nations after the war was over to replace the then-defunct League of Nations.

I worked for about two years on the Hill when the resolution was passed in the House, known as the [J. William] Fulbright resolution.

Ingersoll: That was before the end of the war, wasn't it?

Bell: This was before the end of the war. And in the Senate, because Mr. [Thomas] Connally was the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, what had started as the B-2 H-2 resolution, which was [named] for Senators [Joseph] Ball, [Harold] Burton, [Carl] Hatch, and [Lister] Hill, became the Connally resolution and was passed, so that both branches of the Congress were on record by the time planning for the United Nations began.

I then worked as the Washington representative for an organization which was a coalition of groups around the United States

Bell: which had been supporting the idea of the League of Nations and then the other organizations [United Nations]. Then Mrs. Harriman, Mrs. J. Borden Harriman, had started an organization known as the Free World Association, which worked largely with refugee governments which had been overrun by the Nazis. I helped her with that organization, which had no lobby function, but was very much interested in and worked with the different heads of the refugee governments, including [Benedetto] Croce in Italy and--I forgot the name of the men in Greece, and Yugoslavia, Poland, Hungary and so forth.

We had that sort of reservoir of European intelligentsia, who were here to help and who very much, of course, were supporting the idea of the United Nations.

I worked, as I said, with this organization for supporting all of the various pieces of legislation which had to do with the formation of the United Nations. There were a number of different pieces of that [kind of legislation] before the main okay for the charter of the United Nations came through. All of those things, as organizations we worked on; and gradually there became a good, big group of national organizations, business groups, church groups, labor groups, women's groups, who were officially supporting the concept of a United Nations.

At the 1944 Democratic convention, I handled the scheduling of testimony at the convention on foreign policy to make it possible for all of these groups to come in and present to the Democratic party the fact that there was this wide support of the United Nations. That having gone through, then there was a complete gamut of other bills that the United States Information Program--we all of us worked on.

Then there was a time at which this temporary coalition of organizations supporting the United Nations in Washington broke up, leaving no central spot to which organizations could go for information on international issues. A group of us formed what was known as International Legislation Information Service--ILIS for short--which was an informal ad hoc exchange of information for all organizations supporting the various foreign policy issues as they came along.

It was not formalized. It shifted from time to time. The people who would, for instance, support the information program were, a great many of them, the same. But it pulled in a different group of people also, like the various media people, who were very much supporting it. There were issues like the Greek-Turkish aid, where organizations like church groups and women's groups

Bell: would support, say, Helen Douglas's position, but the business groups and even the labor groups went the other way.

So as a group, we worked with the ones who rallied each time. We made no attempt to sort them out. They had to sort themselves out [laughs] as to what their position was. Then we did help them. They would meet, they would exchange information about which members of Congress they'd seen, what they thought they were, and also what the situation was around the country and which people were able to do the most in which district. In other words, it was a clearinghouse of information on legislative positions of the members of Congress.

We had a big map up on the wall on which we had plain old thumbtacks for each member of Congress and the two senators from each state. These were colored according to what was the consensus of the opinion about them on each issue as it came along. We went from--blue was good, and green was fairly good. White--we didn't know, or neutral. Yellow was pretty bad, and red was terrible.

Ingersoll: What a clever idea!

Bell: So that we could look at the United States and see. Then the various groups could themselves assess their own strengths in those districts. Then they did the work. This is why I say I was not, as such, a lobbyist.

Ingersoll: You were helping to furnish this kind of information?

Bell: I was helping them to exchange that information really from among themselves.

Ingersoll: To many people who were lobbying, is that right?

Bell: Yes, they nearly all were. But they needed a place to meet to exchange-- Also, the information from one issue carried over into the next thing, so it had validity. You never started from nothing, you always started on past experience.

Ingersoll: Where was the office located?

Bell: It was here in Washington. We were at 1710 I Street, actually. I think the building's torn down now. Anyway, this was actually I think a quite successful operation.

Ingersoll: How many years did that run?



Bell: It just ran about four years or a little longer. '45--no, it was four. My husband was sent to Paris with the State Department, and I went and another one of the gals, Grace Coy--[laughs] who's going with me, incidentally, to the country this afternoon--her husband was transferred to Albuquerque, New Mexico. So we closed our coordinating operation, hoping that somebody else could pick it up, and they never did. We've never had that sort of thing since.

Ingersoll: Isn't that too bad?

Bell: It is too bad, because number one, it's wasteful. There have been other coalitions. In fact, I started another one just on the issue of foreign aid, because at the time just before we quit, I had handled the Marshall Plan lobby operation here in town, which was still--we were still operating as ILIS, but I also was sort of head of their office in Washington.

Then after I went to Paris, I came home one year, 1951, because they were in trouble with the foreign aid bill, and stayed here for three months. We revived what we called the Point Four Information Service, which was the same sort of coalition operation to work on issues of foreign aid.

Ingersoll: Now ILIS operated during 1949--?

Bell: Well, from '44, really, or '45 to '49. In that time the issue, which was not really foreign policy, but which involved us all and we worked very hard on, was the atomic energy legislation.

Ingersoll: Yes, that was so important, wasn't it?

Bell: And with that, Helen was very active.

My own appearances on the Hill, when I would see members of Congress personally, were usually to people who were promoting the piece of legislation. I did not go around and try to make people vote for something, but I would go to see, for instance, Helen and ask her opinion on how things were shaping up, which people were good and which people were acting badly, and what could the different organizations do to help.

I saw a good many people in that way. Senator Fulbright, for instance. He wasn't then the chairman. He was later. And Senator [John] Sparkman, who was on the Foreign Relations Committee. For the purpose of getting information from them about which among the organizations could work most effectively where.



Ingersoll: It was, in a way, kind of a liaison job, wasn't it, between Congress and the people who were trying to promote a kind of--?

Bell: That's right, because instead of a member of Congress having to see a whole gamut of organizations, because sometimes there were eighty, you could ask him about [his attitude toward] all of them. Also you could do things like look at their mail and see which people that you were working with were really producing effective communications and which ones were not.

Ingersoll: So you must have seen quite a variety, quite a number of people through the years.

Bell: Well, I saw a great many people. I saw them generally--well, I don't know any other time that I did see them. I saw people who were actively promoting legislation within their committees and they were for it, and they were working for the administration or they were working on their own. But their job was to promote the legislation inside the House or the Senate. My job and Grace's and Lil Jones's was to help from the outside. We were all volunteer.

Ingersoll: All volunteer?

Bell: There was never a salary paid. A good many of the people in the organizations were staff people, but we were not. We were doing it simply as a labor of love.

Ingersoll: What sort of reception did you get from congressmen and senators generally, as women in this position?

Bell: Oh, they liked it. I don't think there was ever a question of being women or men--

Ingersoll: It didn't make any difference.

Bell: --because we were helping them.

Ingersoll: Yes, you certainly were.

Bell: I think that if we were doing the other things, going around knocking on doors trying to convince somebody to be for something that he wasn't for, or hadn't made his mind up about--this would have presented some male-female opposition, maybe.

Ingersoll: Yes.

Bell: But as it was, we were actually sort of aides to them.

Ingersoll: Of course.

Bell: So there was no reason for them to feel--

Helen Douglas's Sources of Information and Effect on Others

Ingersoll: When did you first go to see Helen, or perhaps meet her in some other circumstances besides on the Hill?

Bell: I don't think I had met Helen before she came to Congress. I knew who she was, of course, and I knew of her when she was running for office. Jerry Voorhis, who was the original victim [laughs] of Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ had been a good friend at work and had remained a good friend after his defeat. He was working for many years with the co-op association. The co-op people were among the ones who were working [for an international organization].

Ingersoll: Yes, there's always a very close tie-in between co-op people and people interested in foreign affairs, I think.

Bell: This is right. And then I had done a bunch of position papers in connection with the Free World Association with, of all people, Orson Welles, who was on our board. He had a young man at that time who was helping him write things (I sent him material for a number of months) named Alan Cranston, who is now a senator from California.

I had heard about Helen and her work from them, but I think I first met Helen after she came to Congress and had begun to be active in foreign affairs legislation. Then I did see her in '44 at the [Democratic] convention.

Ingersoll: Oh yes, when you were arranging for the speakers from the various groups.

Bell: From all the different organizations.

Ingersoll: Did you have any particular contact at that time?

Bell: I was a very good friend--well, I've had a good many Democratic contacts, because a good friend of mine was India Edwards.

Ingersoll: Oh, yes.

Bell: India and I have worked together on a great many things. I

Bell: think it was at India's where I first met Helen. Another good friend of mine was Helen Fuller, who was the editor of the New Republic who was also a close friend of Helen Douglas. So we had many ways to come together.

Ingersoll: What were some of your first impressions? Do you have anything that comes to mind about Helen Douglas, the kind of person she was, either personally or politically?

Bell: Well, personally--obviously she was a very attractive and very intelligent person. As far as politics is concerned, she was a very different creature from those you usually run into.

Ingersoll: Could you elaborate on that a little bit?

Bell: Well, just that she was-- Number one, she had been in her own right a very successful person on the stage and on the screen. She had an assurance that frequently women in the Congress do not have. We had the other one named Clare Boothe Luce who had in a way something of the same background [but] whose career took a totally opposite turn. But they both had that sort of personal assurance that gave them a reception. They were listened to in a way that other women have not been.

As a matter of fact, most women hitherto had been the wives of a member of Congress who had died. They were, in that sense, sort of in their husband's shoes. So these two were really quite different and stood out for that reason. I think it was a help to them. I also think that it was somewhat of an annoyance to other members of Congress.

Men either liked Helen very much or they were annoyed. She could and did defer to them. She was as good a--what should I say?--persuader as anybody around, and could be extremely charming to them; but if she didn't feel like it, or if they were, she thought, very obviously not just wrong in opinion, but not good people, she could be pretty crisp in her treatment of them. Some of them didn't care for it very much.

This was also true of the press.

Ingersoll: Oh, that's interesting. Could you give me any examples of this sort of thing?

Bell: Well, it's very difficult to. It's been a long time ago, but there were members of the press, I know, who just in the first place thought she spoke without knowledge. Having assumed that position--Joe Alsop was one of them--they maintained it simply because she was taking positions that were different from their



Bell: own. However, these were the exceptions. Actually, at that time, those people were themselves in the minority in opinion. We have now a great many of the so-called "conservative" writers. But in those days, right after the war, nearly everybody was internationalist, everybody wanted to help Europe come back. Everybody was feeling very much as if there was nothing the United States couldn't do if we wanted to.

This extended to the press as well. We had our hardcore in the Congress who were the old, mostly Republican, isolationist types from the Middle West. We had our extremely conservative ones from the South. They were internationalist in those days, only as long as it didn't run into one of their basic prejudices.

Ingersoll: Do you remember anything about any of Helen's relationships with any of these people?

Bell: No, I honestly don't, because mostly I would have seen her with the other--[laughs] my friends or her friends, or in connection with issues. As I say, I usually saw the people who were working the same side of the road I was. So I did not see her in connection with people whose views might have differed from hers. Evie [Chavoor] could probably tell you who some of these people were.

Ingersoll: That would be a good thing for me to pursue with Evie a little bit more.

Bell: I really did not see that side of her.

Ingersoll: Was Helen quite accessible to you usually?

Bell: Oh yes. Sure, we had quite close working connections. I always did, and I think actually more on the whole atomic energy issue, civilian control of atomic energy, than on any other one subject, because that ballooned and really was a very tough fight.

Ingersoll: Would you normally go to her office to speak with her and get the information from her?

Bell: I went to her office and then she came to ours, or we saw each other at night in her place or at Helen's. Mine was a little further out--

Ingersoll: At Helen Fuller's?

Bell: Helen Fuller's or at Helen Douglas's. But then whenever we were on the--actually, there was one time on the Hill when I was down there a great deal, but I was more in the office of Senator Brien



Bell: McMahon, whose bill it was we were working on. I had an office in behind his where people could run in and out. I just hung my hat down there [laughs] a good part of the time.

Helen was in and out, and working very closely House-side, while Brien was working Senate-side. We were exchanging all the information that we could.

Ingersoll: Did you feel that she was generally well informed on the sorts of things that you would talk to her about?

Bell: If Helen was not well informed--nobody could be on every subject.

Ingersoll: There was so much coming up in those days, and so many things that she was interested in.

Bell: She worked very hard to become informed. She would ask for the best sources of information, and really worked hard to have an understanding of what the issues were and what the objections were. She was never, in any sense, superficial on any of it. In those days, they didn't have as big a staff as they do now.

Ingersoll: Oh, it's very different, I understand.

Bell: So it really involved a lot more personal work on each issue than it does now.

Ingersoll: Speaking of staff, do you have any impression of the one or two people who I do understand worked with her on foreign policy? A Jerome Spingarn?

Bell: Jerry Spingarn. I didn't remember actually that he worked for Helen. I read that here [on outline].

Ingersoll: It was Evie Chavoor who mentioned him.

Bell: Evie did--well, he undoubtedly did. I know I worked with Jerry.

Ingersoll: Did you?

Bell: And he worked in different places. I just didn't remember at what time she had [his help]. Of course, Alan Barth's name is there. He wasn't really working for Helen. He worked for the Washington Post. That was a close friend and a very well-informed man on foreign policy, no question. He just retired a year or two ago from the Post.

Ingersoll: I think Evie told me that he was somebody whom Helen often went to for the kinds of information that she needed.

Bell: That's right. That's the sort of thing she would do, because she would trust Alan, as I would have too, for good judgement in case there were questions, or also good judgement on people whom she wanted to know or on whom else to get to, or if somebody had approached her and she wanted an opinion as to how trustworthy this source of information was--Alan was a good resource person.

And Jerry was. Jerry worked later on the question of disarmament, largely. He was, for a good many years, at the State Department in the disarmament and arms control section of the State Department. He lives around the corner from me right now.

Ingersoll: Oh, he does. In this very neighborhood?

Bell: Yes. He had--I think it's a job on the Hill somewhere. I've forgotten right now where he is. Maybe it's the International Relations Committee. I'm not sure. I know he goes down there.

Ingersoll: Were both Alan Barth and Jerome Spingarn rather well informed across the board on foreign policy, or did they have special areas of interests?

Bell: I think Alan was across the board. I think Jerry was probably more limited.

Ingersoll: What would he have been a specialist in?

Bell: Well, for instance, I think he was a specialist in terms of disarmament and political foreign policy. I don't think he was particularly well informed in terms of economic foreign policy, like foreign trade or foreign aid or the Marshall Plan. It just was not his field. I don't mean he was uninterested or ignorant.

Ingersoll: But one has to be limited some times if one wants to go deeply into something else.

Bell: It was not his own field of operations, that's right.

Ingersoll: Did Helen ask you for information often, or on occasion?

Bell: Yes, I would say, a good many times. Largely again, I think that was the--

[end tape 1, side A; begin tape 1, side B]

Bell: Helen would probably not have asked me for a great deal of special information, because I was myself a generalist working on a good many things. However, I did work with a great many people who did have the more specialized information. She was apt to ask me

- Bell: about them, or who to see or if she had already seen some people or been approached by people, what did I think of them and their sources of information.
- Ingersoll: So she was constantly checking back and forth to know the value of the kind of information she had gotten.
- Bell: This is right.
- Ingersoll: And you then, as I understand it, were rather constantly meeting with people in all of these different organizations, the labor, the chamber of commerce, and so forth, who were concerned with foreign policy. Is that right?
- Bell: Yes. We met when there was an issue very much before the Hill. We sometimes met two or three times a week. But we always met at least twice a month to bring ourselves up to date on the information that we had been able to gather, and that the various organizations had gotten from out in the country about how people felt about this issue or that. It was this sort of cross-fertilization that we were able to put together, and which was of course useful to people on the Hill.
- Ingersoll: Then as you say, also just being able to refer Helen and other people like her to the individuals who had gone into these sorts of things deeply and had strong feelings about them. That must have been very valuable.
- Bell: I think it was helpful. I think that it saved a great deal of time for somebody who is as active as Helen was to be able to shortcut the process of getting that sort of information. Particularly since at that time, the staff of a member of Congress was very small. They did not have within their own offices people who could readily find that information, or they didn't have enough people to cover all the issues.
- Ingersoll: I understand that it was very difficult for Helen to get the kind of background information she needed. There just wasn't money in the budget for the many sorts of things that she was very concerned with.
- Bell: Unless she could tap it from the outside from a source that she could trust. This is right.
- Ingersoll: Do you have any feeling or any information about how Helen was able to work with other congressmen to convince them of whatever point of view she finally did arrive at?



- Bell: Well, I think she was very convincing. I don't know personally of incidents, because I simply was not around at that sort of time, not on the floor nor in the offices with other members of Congress. I should think that Evie Chavoor could tell you more.
- Ingersoll: Again, that's another thing I can recheck with her. Did you ever hear any of her speeches on that floor?
- Bell: Yes, I did, a good many times. She was very good.
- Ingersoll: What did you feel--could you get any sort of feeling for the sort of reception she was getting?
- Bell: If you've been to the Congress many times, you will know that there are a good many times when the speech which is good and it sounds good, may be listened to by ten or twelve members of the Congress. So reception, in the sense of performance, you really don't get, because the ones on the floor may be reading the paper, they may be talking to their own staff. In other words, people who make speeches in Congress do it for the record and for the press and not for the reception that it gets right at the time.
- Ingersoll: Do you have the feeling at all that when a speech gets the sort of reception where there are very few people there, and they aren't seeming to pay much attention, that this in any way meant to be a slam against the person who's speaking? The reason I ask this is that someone told me that they felt that in a couple of Helen's very important speeches, she got this kind of reception, and it was meant to put her down. Would that make any sense to you?
- Bell: I frankly don't think it would. There may have been a time when people were there and got up and left or something that looked obvious.
- Ingersoll: Did you ever observe anything like that?
- Bell: No, and I would say it happens to every member of Congress. They just don't stay and listen to each other speak. They say, and sometimes we'll say, "That was a magnificent speech. I read it at breakfast."
- Ingersoll: But they didn't hear it in the House.
- Bell: They didn't hear it in the House, unless for some reason they happened to be there and needed to stay, or had told Helen, for instance, that they would stay and listen. That can happen.

Bell: But there's never any mass attendance, which is a very difficult thing for people around the country to understand. It seems as though they just talk to the vacant chairs. They're all in Congress, they're all working hard, and they just have heard so many speeches that they do other things, that's all. They know they will be able to read it. If it's a subject that they want to know about, they'll read the speech very carefully. So your own best friend might stay off the floor.

Foreign Policy Issues: Greek-Turkish Aid, Atomic Energy Control, Reciprocal Trade

Ingersoll: That's interesting. Let's turn to the issues of foreign policy that came up during those years that Helen was in Congress and you talked to her. Do you have any recollections of any specific legislation and any of the ways Helen was trying to reach out for information to form her judgements on it?

Bell: Well, the beginning legislation was mostly United Nations legislation. I think that Helen's mind was made up, as far as the approval of the basic idea was concerned. I think she got as much information to help in promoting as she could. But at that time, the controversy was at a minimum. Later years when the whole question of aid came up, the Marshall Plan had no real bad opposition. The Greek-Turkish aid was the first of the split. Helen's position on that was really bucking the trend. She didn't have much support on that, and most of the organizations that I was working with were split.

Ingersoll: They were?

Bell: There were a good many of the church groups that went along with Helen. Business groups did not. Labor groups did not.

Ingersoll: Were they split on it for the same reasons that Helen--let me put it this way. Were the ones who were negative toward it negative for the same reasons that Helen was not for it?

Bell: Yes, there were reasons of doubt as to the political wisdom. There were reasons to doubt the integrity of the governments of Turkey and Greece. These were really the so-called "liberal" groups, who did not believe that all of the opposition in Greece and Turkey was communist. You see, this is where the first of the charges against Helen came from. She was being pro-communist because she was against aid to Greece and Turkey.

Ingersoll: And felt that one could have just as bad excesses from the right as from the left?

Bell: This is right. She was not [communist]. She felt what later became very apparent was true, that the excesses of the reactionary governments would in the long run be more apt to make for communist government, because people would rebel against those organizations, and it would give the Marxist groups a better chance to come in, which happened in Greece. Not so much in Turkey, but it certainly did in Greece.

Ingersoll: Were the people in your organization--the various organizations in your overall organization--more split on the Greek-Turkish issue than on the other issues, would you say?

Bell: Well, yes.

Ingersoll: Was this a really difficult issue in comparison to the others?

Bell: Yes, it was, because a good many of them who did not want to support the Greece-Turkey bill decided, all right, we'll meet in one bunch. The others met in another bunch. I practically stayed out of it, because I wasn't going to not work with the whole big group on the Marshall Plan stuff.

Ingersoll: You tried to maintain a neutral position, is that right?

Bell: I tried to maintain--well, I didn't maintain a neutral position. I just didn't meet with either one of them. But they knew what I felt. I agreed with Helen. But it really was a split between the liberal groups who felt that the matters of morals and civil rights mattered more, which would be the church groups, some of--at that time--the ethnic groups. Strangely enough, the ethnic groups at that time were largely more concerned with civil rights. Now they are most reactionary groups, but at that time, if you talked to Croatians and Lithuanians and Yugoslavs, they were so full of the excesses of the Nazi regime that they reacted against any authoritarian types of government.

By now they've forgotten all about those, and the authoritarian government is Russia, of course.

Ingersoll: So the church groups, and the ethnic groups, were among the liberals who split and were against the Greek-Turkish loan on the basis of civil rights?

Bell: There were a number of them who thought--and I'm hazy about these, it's been a long time, but there were a number of amendments,



- Bell: some of which Helen proposed--they thought that they could support the Greece-Turkey bill (as I recall, Helen did too) if they could get the bill amended in certain ways. They fought back and forth over them. In the long run, Helen did vote against. I remember that.
- Ingersoll: Helen, I think, also had the strong feeling that if some of this could all be under the United Nations, there would be much better use of arms, patrolling of the border, and that kind of thing.
- Bell: This was one of her proposals, that it should be United Nations. It was one of the reasons why Helen later strongly supported the Korean aid, because Mr. [Harry] Truman did go in under the auspices of the United Nations. He sort of went in and made the United Nations come along with him [laughs], but I mean it actually was done as a United Nations operation. The feeling had been among a good many groups that had the Greece-Turkey proposal been done that way, that it would have been better.
- Ingersoll: Were you at all aware on this Greece-Turkey bill of the real difficulty in decision-making that Helen had? Evie Chavoor mentioned that to me, how she wrestled with this problem of which direction to go.
- Bell: Yes, because her entire record was one of pro-assistance to anybody. On the whole question of help, Helen had always been one of the ones who wanted to help. This was the first issue on which she couldn't decide whether one should or one shouldn't. It was sort of a watershed for her, and she did struggle with it, and finally simply couldn't make herself go along and vote for it.
- Then later, of course, it was used against her.
- Ingersoll: Of course, in the 1950 campaign. Were there any other of the international issues that you remember where she had any of the same kind of struggle?
- Bell: No, I don't think so, because I think if there were some that she had some objections to, that she would think that the main-stream was so much what she wanted that even though she tried to get them changed a bit, if they were not changed, she would go ahead and support them. I think this is the first one, and one of the very few in her total experience, of this sort of international issue. She did not go along with it.

I remember she even went along with those questions of aid to China. I mean, Chiang Kai-shek China. While she didn't particularly admire that gentleman, she nevertheless did go along

- Bell: and support the American efforts to help them [the Nationalist Chinese] when they were getting into Taiwan. There was a special bill on aid to students that I recall, Chinese students. I think she finally voted for that.
- Ingersoll: I think she did too.
- Bell: But I know she had some doubts, because she had a feeling that a good many of those people that came in [to the U.S.] might have been sort of China Lobby-type people. But if there were--
- Ingersoll: People who came in--?
- Bell: --as students, they were going to be used then by the China Lobby people to keep promoting guns and food and whatnot for Chiang Kai-shek's forces.
- Ingersoll: We might talk about the control of atomic energy as it was discussed in any of the specific instances you remember in McMahon's office.
- Bell: That I would like to maybe do another time, because that was a considerable long, long issue. She was very close to it.
- Ingersoll: Leo Goodman worked with her on that, I understand. Are you acquainted with him?
- Bell: Leo's got my files. He borrowed them a few years ago.
- Ingersoll: I did look at some of the material that he has. Maybe that came from you, at the time.
- Bell: Well, I'm quite sure most of it did, because he came over here and took it.
- Ingersoll: Oh, did he?
- Bell: He was going to give them back to me and he never has. Maybe it's just as well it stays in his basement, or wherever it is.
- Ingersoll: He has apparently a continuing interest in all of this.
- Bell: I think it's an odd circumstance that Leo's union, which was very helpful in fighting for civilian control of atomic energy at that time, this last year--well, just several months ago--voted or was lobbying for abolishing the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy, which was set up by the McMahon act, which Helen and I worked so hard to get.

Ingersoll: That does seem strange, doesn't it?

Bell: Interesting in terms of evolution.

Ingersoll: Yes, how do you interpret that?

Bell: Well, I interpret it by--well, a good many things which bear out that if you don't remember history, you're condemned to repeat it! [Laughs]

Ingersoll: New leadership that just doesn't know what went on.

Bell: [Firmly] They just don't remember, or don't get the significance of what they're doing. The issue has quit being civilian control of atomic energy, they think, which was one of the reasons for having a non-military oversight. What they did in this issue was to simply [try to] do away with a way for the non-military members of Congress to have any supervision over the military use of atomic energy. I don't believe that happened. I don't think that's true yet. Helen and I talked about it a little bit this winter.

The issues have changed. They're all concerned, for good reason, about the different issues, nuclear proliferation. The union, which is oil and chemical, which is Leo Goodman's, is very much in favor of nuclear energy, because they've got jobs.

Ingersoll: Oh, that would change the whole point of view, wouldn't it?

Bell: They've got lots of jobs. By now, they've organized it, instead of just oil and chemical, it's got atomic on the end of it. So anything which might discourage the proliferation of nuclear energy plants--

Ingersoll: --they would feel would be to their personal detriment, wouldn't they?

Bell: That's right. We have a changed picture there, which isn't surprising, I suppose, but it's sort of alarming when you think that it represents a change big enough to really make a change of a committee in the Congress. They have [wanted to] turn over that whole question of nuclear energy to the Committee on Science and Technology, which is chaired by Mr. Jackson, and the Armed Services Committee.\*

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\*Currently there is a Joint Committee on Atomic Energy of which Henry M. Jackson is the vice chairman. He is also chairman of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. There is a House Committee on Science and Technology of which Olin E. Teague is the chairman. [Ed. May 26, 1978]



Ingersoll: That would make a great, great change.

Bell: There is no place there for the consideration by the international relations committee in either the House or the Senate. The atomic energy committee was supposed to--and did--have a certain cross-membership with the international relations committees. Now there [would be] no way to. So you [would] have a committee which considers it in terms of its scientific and technical applications, proliferation of plants, and then you [would] have the armed services.

Ingersoll: But not at all in terms of its effect on people, international relations, which Helen herself felt was so terribly important.

Bell: Well, it's the end of the world. They all say that, including even Mr. [Arthur] Schlesinger and Mr. [Cyrus] Vance and Mr. [Jimmy] Carter. If we have an atomic war, that's it.

Ingersoll: We might leave any further discussion then of the atomic energy issue, since as you say, that is very complicated. Was reciprocal trade an issue that was important to your people? It was one of the things that came up during that period.

Bell: Oh, yes. Particularly to me, because my husband was in the field of international trade.

Ingersoll: What was his work?

Bell: Well, his work with the government was director of the Office of International Trade, and then he was in the State Department. When he retired--this is later on, after Helen was gone--we started a special committee to work on the whole subject of international trade. Anyway, this was an issue that was perennial, every three or four years it came up. So we had the '45 fight for trade, and we had the '49 fight for trade. No, '48. '45 and '48.

Ingersoll: It was a three-year period until they then changed it so it could only be a one-year period, which made it much less certain for European countries.

Bell: It finally disappeared when Mr. [Lyndon] Johnson simply dropped the whole idea of reciprocal trade.

Ingersoll: Does this bring anything particular to your mind in terms of Helen and the way she worked in 1948, say, or 1949?

Bell: Well, no, except that she was very good. Among other things she would do would be to do her homework well enough. She did a good

- Bell: many outside speeches on the subject of trade.
- Ingersoll: Around Washington and outside?
- Bell: Well, around Washington and in California. She was particularly good with women's groups, because she had a very good--trade is a rather technical subject. It can be very dry.
- Ingersoll: And she would understand this, and know how to dramatize it?
- Bell: She could make it into something that women's groups could become interested in and work on fairly hard--and they did.
- Ingersoll: Did she try to bring it down to what it really meant to a family and this sort of thing?
- Bell: Yes.
- Ingersoll: The sort of thing she'd done with the Market Basket speech when it was a matter of price control, and this kind of thing.
- Bell: This is right. Sugar, for instance, costs three cents a pound more because of foolish tariff regulations. She would make it a graphic presentation.
- Ingersoll: That people could understand.
- Bell: We could use an approach like right now, for some of this.
- Ingersoll: Yes. Did she ask you for information as to whom to talk to to get the basic factual material she would need?
- Bell: Well, yes. We regularly sent her a good many things on that subject. And on a good many of the other things. Whenever there was an issue coming up and we began to get papers that were particularly good or we thought so, we fed them in. She didn't have to ask, as a rule.
- Ingersoll: Would these be papers that were put out by the various organizations?
- Bell: Papers put out by the organizations, papers put out by research-type organizations like Brookings or like the Council on Foreign Relations or papers put out by the State Department or by the British Embassy--wherever they came from, if we ran across them, if they seemed to us good or even [laughs] if they seemed particularly bad, if they were of interest, and not the sort of thing that would normally come in in your morning mail.

Ingersoll: Well, it sounds as though you provided really a splendid service for Helen as well as for other congresspeople.

Bell: If any of them wanted it, we could. We never did just make blanket mailings, because we weren't that sort of organization. We didn't have the funds, for one thing. But for people with whom we were working, we did do that sort of sorting-out job.

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HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS PROJECT

Arthur Goldschmidt

HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS: CONGRESSIONAL ALLY IN WATER AND POWER

An Interview Conducted by  
Amelia Fry  
in 1976

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ARTHUR GOLDSCHMIDT





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## INTERVIEW HISTORY

Arthur Goldschmidt, by Helen Gahagan Douglas's own appraisal, played a helpful and educational role in assisting her in her struggles for the preservation of the 160-acre limitation and for equitable power distribution while she was in Congress. In the process, Mr. Goldschmidt and, later, his wife, became fast friends with the Douglasses.

Both he and his wife readily agreed to the interview. It was taped in their 86th Street apartment in New York and had been arranged with assurances by Helen Douglas that the interview would be highly productive. That was certainly true. In fact, in staying within the budgetary and policy strictures of the project for which the interview was produced, we covered a necessarily small portion of Mr. Goldschmidt's own career. It is to be hoped that when this transcript is pieced together with other oral histories that he has done for various presidential libraries, a fuller picture is preserved.

As old hands at being taped for history, both Goldschmidts were able to talk off-the-cuff and casually. Mr. Goldschmidt, ("Tex" to friends like Helen Douglas) relaxed in his chair and after a brief discussion of the topics we should cover, gave a lucid and well-organized picture of the points of controversy in both water rights and power development legislation in the '40s, interspersed with lucid descriptions of his own views. Afterwards, he and his wife helped me locate another friend of Helen Douglas's, Alis De Sola, for the afternoon's interview. Their warmth and graciousness made the double interview that summer morning a pleasure in their sunny apartment.

Afterwards, Ingrid Scobie reviewed the transcript, marked ambiguities in the translation process which is required when putting oral speech--even that which is as beautifully structured as Goldschmidt's--into written form. Mr. Goldschmidt then elucidated with inserts in three places, sent a picture and several relevant papers which he had spent a rainy afternoon digging up, promised more if we needed them--and left for Europe. Some of the papers have been put in the appendix; more were filed with Helen Gahagan Douglas papers in The Bancroft Library. More may be sent after the Goldschmidts return from their 1978 European jaunt.

Amelia R. Fry  
Interviewer-Editor

26 June 1978  
Regional Oral History Office  
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University of California at Berkeley



III HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS: CONGRESSIONAL ALLY IN WATER  
AND POWER

[Interview 1: June 30, 1976]  
[begin tape 1, side A]

Two Critical Issues: 160-Acre Limitation and Electrical  
Power Development

Educating Douglas on the Central Valley Project

- Goldschmidt: I first met Helen in California at the home of Professor Paul [S.] Taylor, who was working with me on the Central Valley Project, and who was interested in getting Helen, who was then I think Democratic committeewoman in California, to interest herself in the field of the Central Valley Project as she had in the migrant labor problems. I think she had met Paul through the migrant labor issue. And Paul wanted to broaden her out to include the Central Valley issue.
- Fry: At this time you were the Director of Power in the Department of Interior. Was this in his home in Berkeley?
- Goldschmidt: In his home in Berkeley. He and his wife were there, and they invited Helen to dinner. I think the four of us spent the evening together. She was extremely lively and interested and asked a lot of questions. My own field of interest was primarily in the whole power issue out there. But through Paul Taylor, I had gotten interested in the 160-acre limitation issue as it related to the Central Valley in California.\*

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\* Farms that receive irrigation water from federally-financed water projects cannot exceed 160 acres per owner--320 acres for a husband and wife.



Goldschmidt: Senator [Sheridan] Downey was trying to get the 160-acre limitation lifted. Through Paul Taylor--I always claimed I was Paul's cat's paw in Washington, rather than that he was my consultant in California--I got the Interior Department to take a very tough stand on the 160-acre limitation issue. I suppose that evening we spent more time on the 160-acre limitation question than we did on the power issue. The power issue was a rather simple one. Reclamation law, as most federal law, required that power be sold competitively, and particularly with preference to public agencies and cooperatives. Of course, the big issue there was that the PG & E [Pacific Gas and Electric] wanted to be sure that it got all of the power that came from the Central Valley projects, and was trying to see that it was bottled up, as they had the Hetch Hetchy power, which Interior had also been involved in. It was our interest to get Helen concerned with that, because at the time, most of the interests in California were very strongly of the opinion that the 160-acre limitation should not apply in California. There were plenty of people in the Interior Department itself that were eager to see it lifted for California, because they didn't want to take on the massive interests, political and otherwise, that would be involved in the fight in California.

#### Department of Interior and the 160-Acre Limitation

Fry: Have you told elsewhere your story of how you managed to get the 160-acre limitation more of a de facto policy in the Interior Department?

Goldschmidt: No. Well, I shouldn't put that quite so personally; I was one of a number of people. Paul Taylor was the one that kept my feet to the fire on that issue. The trouble with the Interior Department was that the Bureau of Reclamation became an engineers' program, and they were more interested in building things than how they were managed. Moreover, many of its biggest supporters were people that were concerned with getting the water as cheaply as possible. They weren't interested in any of the social aspects of the reclamation law.

Fry: You're talking about the supporters of lifting the ban who were outside the bureau.

Goldschmidt: All through the seventeen western states.

Fry: Which were the larger landowners?

Goldschmidt: Often the larger landowners, the big business community, and so forth. They had managed to get the reclamation law lifted in specific cases. For instance, on the Colorado-Big Thompson --under Harold [L.] Ickes, by the way--there was a special law introduced of the same nature that Senator Downey was trying to get in California, that abrogated the 160-acre limitation with respect to Colorado-Big Thompson water. This was done on behalf of the sugar beet interests, and other big landowners, who claimed that you couldn't divide the land and have it a profitable operation.

In California, the same thing was alleged. Big outfits like the [Joseph] Di Giorgios, big Di Giorgio wineries, the big land companies were terribly eager to have the reclamation law lifted with respect to the Central Valley Project. They had a whole bunch of arguments, first and foremost that it was uneconomic and modern farming required big landowning. As a matter of fact, Di Giorgio put a huge series of advertisements in the eastern press, or I think in the national press. It was in the Washington Post, the New York Times, and all over, saying that the 160-acre limitation was confiscation because it would mean breaking up a profitable operation which was vertically integrated and required to be held in their hands. However, after the first round of the battle and before the water was even available, they actually sold their vine lands in small lots to individual owners and developed them into a cooperative [laughs], and have been going ever since on a broken-down basis of operation, even before they were required to--it may have been under the fear of being required to. It may also have been a wonderful land speculation scheme.

You see, the reclamation law has two factors. One is to try to get the benefits of a federal investment spread as widely as possible among the people. The trouble with some of these situations is that when they felt the hot breath of reclamation by the federal government or improvement due to other circumstances, they often sold at highly speculative, highly inflated values, or at least at the values of the final water development. They made a big windfall profit from their dry-land holdings, some of which had been held for years and years and years without adequate taxation or any kind of development.

But it was this issue that was brought to the fore in California. California being the kind of state it is, there were a lot of people that felt that "big is better," and that you needed larger holdings in order to make an economic go of the land. There's still a lot of argument as to whether you do or don't, but frankly, on irrigated land a hundred and sixty



Goldschmidt: acres is too much for a family-sized farm. And on most irrigated land, you'd have to have it in much smaller units than that. In the first place, you only need a very small unit of irrigated land for such things as fruit and vegetables. A plot much smaller than 160 acres yields one hell of a lot of money, so you don't really need big plots in order to get an adequate income.

Of course, on things like wheat--which is now being irrigated many places in California--rice, and other grain and large-scale crops, frequently the mechanization factor calls for larger units. But whether you need to have a single owner for those units or not is just another issue. I think we're getting off of Helen, but these were the issues that we discussed with her that first evening.

#### Social Implications of Small Farms

Goldschmidt: My brother Walter R. Goldschmidt, who's now currently the president of the American Association of Anthropologists, was then a young struggling graduate student at Berkeley. He had written a study, financed by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, in which he made a study of Arvin and Dinuba--two towns in California, in the Central Valley. One was where the land holdings were large, and the other where the land holdings were small.

This study proved what I've always thought academics did to prove what any common sense would tell you [laughs], namely, that life in the area where the holdings were small and people had adequate income from the ownership of their own land was a much more decent life. There were better amenities, social services, more churches, more church attendance, better school attendance--all the things that would be attendant on a stable community were true in the small-ownership town. In the big-ownership town, you had transient labor, migrants, delinquency, drunkenness--all the things attendant upon industrialized agriculture, which calls for seasonal employment and therefore all kinds of social unrest, and socially undesirable circumstances.

That study, by the way, was not published by the Department of Agriculture because it was so controversial! [Laughs] It was only published because I think it was Paul Taylor who got one of the Senate committees to subpoena it or get it from the Department of Agriculture, and it was published as a Senate

- Goldschmidt: document. He also published it in book form. I suppose it was somewhat modified. The book was called As You Sow. I think I may have it here. It's simply a sociological study of the effects of the thing we were trying to talk about. It was used a lot in the California debates and discussions.
- Fry: Was Helen made aware of that?
- Goldschmidt: I'm sure she was. I can't recall all of the circumstances of our first meeting. I remember it was on the subject of the Central Valley Project.
- Fry: It sounds like what she has been telling me of the social implications of small landownership.
- Goldschmidt: Paul, of course, was obsessed by that, and has been all his life. He has worked on the issue both here and abroad. Frankly, much of his obsession has rubbed off on me! [Laughs] At any rate, at that time, the focal point for the fight was California, the Central Valley Project. California, of course, had many other projects in which the 160-acre limitation was honored in the breach. Even in the Central Valley Project, it's never been properly put into effect. As a matter of fact, do you know that the U.S. Supreme Court only recently has upheld the issue again with respect to the projects that were picked up and supported in California to be built by the Corps of Engineers, in the hopes that the 160-acre limitation would not apply. But Paul and I--and I do think the two of us really did it--got the reclamation laws to apply to water from any federal project, just as we got the TVA [Tennessee Valley Authority], and similar laws on power to apply to any federal project in the Flood Control, and Rivers and Harbors Acts of '44 and '45, which were huge omnibus authorization acts. The issue was whether the law was intended to apply to the California project. That act was the one that was up before the courts recently and has just been adjudicated in our favor. You can be damn sure that we had worked on the Congress to an extent that I have no doubt that it applied!

What happened in those omnibus acts is that Congress was dying to get them passed because they were enormous pork-barrel legislation which the Corps of Engineers was cooking up for post-war public works. They had everybody's pet project in them. So when we insisted on these provisions with respect to the water and power, the managers of the bill were eager to get the bills through. We had enough support from the liberal congressmen, many of them from the South--people like [Joseph] Lister Hill and others.



Goldschmidt: Of course, in the East, there was always a fear that if you didn't have the reclamation laws and power laws, that these projects would become great land-grab scandals and power-grab scandals. So we brought these two things up and got those two amendments on those bills. The two bills were going in simultaneously, and I think this issue was the one that held one of them up. I can't remember which one.

They were both intended to be the Flood Control Act of '44 and the Rivers and Harbors Act of '44, but one of them got delayed and it had to be passed in '45. But they both have these two provisions with respect to water and power in them.

At any rate, the power provisions were the preference provisions to public agencies and co-ops and the right to build transmission lines and related facilities to make the preference clause effective. We had the whole national rural electrification crowd behind us on that one because this gave them preference in the sale of any federal power anywhere in the country. It was an enormous boost to rural electrification in the country.

Fry: Helen was in Congress at that time. Do you remember working with her any on this, on the Flood Control and Rivers and Harbors Acts?

Goldschmidt: I don't recall the House end of this thing at all, for some reason or other. I doubt very much I would have to worry about Helen's vote. I had a whole file of stuff that I helped Helen on, drafts, speeches and things of that sort, that I may have sent up to her to put into the record. I'm not certain whether it was on these particular provisions or not. I remember the big fight was in the Senate. That's where I did an awful lot of personal work with the committees.

Early Contacts with Paul S. Taylor: Central Valley Studies and New Deal Relief Programs \*

Let me give you additional two points about Paul. When the Central Valley Project was set up, the Bureau of Reclamation,

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\* See three-volume interview with Paul Schuster Taylor, California Social Scientist, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, 1973, 1975.

Goldschmidt: partly because many of us internally felt we ought to be sure that this enormous project would be properly planned in all respects and not just in its engineering aspects, set up in the Central Valley Studies. The bureau had done the same thing in the Pacific Northwest in connection with the Grand Coulee Dam. That was before I was there, and I never had any part in that particularly, but I did have a part in the Central Valley Studies. It was in connection with that that we hired Paul Taylor as a kind of consultant or adviser to watchdog the power elements of those studies, in part, but also generally to do it. The result of that, though [laughs], was that I got much more involved in Paul's concerns with the 160-acre limitation than he got in my concerns with the power issue, although he always was perfectly loyal about it! But I don't think he ever felt it here [gesturing to the heart] as much as he got me to feel the other issue.

This was an enormous public battle. We were in constant touch with each other by mail and phone and every other way. There was a constant effort. We got involved with the newspapers. I remember one time I wanted to alert our side of the fight to some of the shenanigans that were going on. I talked to Drew Pearson, who was a great friend of ours and on our side in these things, and I said, "Look, this outfit is doing so-and-so." (I don't remember what the issue was). He got it in his column. The next night, I was waked up at two in the morning, or something like that [laughs], by a telephone call from Paul. (He always managed to forget the time difference between California and Washington!) [Laughs] He said, "There's a rumor out here that so-and-so is about to happen."

I said, "Paul, is that rumor in Drew Pearson's column?"

He said rather sheepishly, "Yes, that's where I got it."

I said, "Well, don't wake me up with rumors that I myself planted!" [Laughter]

It was always a great joke between us afterwards. That relationship with Paul has kept on. He scribbles and sends notes about the issues for the rest of your life. I mean, once you're on Paul Taylor's circuit, it's like making a contribution to one of these do-good organizations: you get masses of mail forever after for the Boys' Town, or something like that. Anyway, Paul and I have kept in touch, and we are very good friends.

My first connection with him, I think, would be interesting to your Paul Taylor study. I was still working for Harry



Goldschmidt: [L.] Hopkins, where I started in the relief program. In the drought of '34, [President Franklin D.] Roosevelt got very worried about the drought issue and asked Hopkins to have a study made about what ought to be done. Hopkins, in typical fashion, because he was that kind of a guy, grabbed everybody who could read and write in the top staff and sent them out, together with a number of other people from other departments. He also "borrowed" people that people knew about, and sent them out as teams all the way from the Canadian border to Texas. I was sent to North Dakota, and met up with Paul Taylor as my teammate, although he was much senior to me. I still remember him. He wore a tweed outfit, looked like a German tourist, and had a camera slung over his shoulder. [Laughs] He had a tweed cap that matched and a ruddy face.

He had a capacity to question people in a way that--at that time, I guess I was in my mid-twenties--I found terribly embarrassing. He would go up to a farm lady who was having trouble with her kids and her cattle and God-knows-what, and ask her the most intimate questions, just rattling them off. The funniest thing was that they all answered, for some reason! [Laughs] He had a capacity to get people to answer these questions. He'd make notes for the study he was making.

Fry: In other words, questions about their life styles?

Goldschmidt: What they ate, things of that sort. It seemed to me a bunch of damned embarrassing questions to ask a lot of poor people. But he had no shame about it all. I guess that being a researcher from way back that it didn't occur to him that he was in any way improperly invading their privacy. [Laughs] I would sort of hang back, like I didn't want to be considered part of it. But in the course of our wandering around together, we became very good friends. It was only for several days, and then the whole group met in Chicago. We sort of wrote our report to Hopkins on the plane coming back to Washington.

The result of that trip was that a lot of things came about. One of them was the Federal Surplus Commodity Corporation, I think--the whole cattle-buying scheme, and our use of drought cattle, and setting up canning factories to can the beef so that we could feed it to the unemployed and to the people that needed food. The shelter belt program was taken up after that. All of these things were done to try to affect the drought. Immediate issues and long-range issues came out of that set of reports. I don't know how many people were involved. There must have been a hundred or more.

Fry: From what other agencies too?



Goldschmidt: The center of it were the FERA [Federal Emergency Relief Administration] crowd. But other people were brought in from Agriculture, or suggested by Agriculture. I don't remember what time of the year. It must have been some time when some professor like Paul could be made available on short notice. I never asked him how he got involved in that. I honestly don't know. I remember that was where we first met.

I guess he came to see me about Central Valley later, or something like that, because he was always interested in that issue. But that was a long time later, you see. That would have been eight or ten years later. I think we kept in touch in that period in some way or other--postcards or something.

Then when I got involved in Central Valley, I went out to California quite a number of times, and to Hetch Hetchy. I met up with Paul and his wife (the photographer Dorothea Lange) then. I used to go visit with them whenever I was out there.

Fry: That was during the power issue over Hetch Hetchy?

Goldschmidt: Yes, Hetch Hetchy power issues and Central Valley power issues. Then Paul, on one of those trips, had me to dinner with Helen. That's how I first met her. You remember first meeting Helen, because she's one of the most memorable people I know! [Laughs] There are masses of people who consider themselves more important than I don't remember. [Laughs] But Helen is a memorable person.

#### Private vs. Public Ownership of Power

Fry: I gather that you were more successful in your dealings with the 160-acre limitation issue than you were with PG & E and the power issue in the Central Valley and other places?

Goldschmidt: Well, yes. The PG & E is a pretty powerful outfit. One of the problems was that the question of public ownership was very mixed in California. As you know, Los Angeles had a publicly-owned power system. The problem with public ownership of power is that it's often used as a means of solving a tax problem, rather than a means of benefiting the poor consumer. You can frequently use a publicly-owned system and, through power rates, sort of subsidize the city. Of course we were rather opposed to that. We didn't want to use the power system as a means of the rich avoiding paying their

- Goldschmidt: taxes and letting the poor lady that irons with an electric iron pay the taxes for the big shots. [Laughs]
- Fry: By the city charging rates high enough that it can avoid levying higher taxes?
- Goldschmidt: By skewing the rates in such a way that industry gets a particularly low rate, and so forth. That's one thing. The other thing is that the private utilities had not done too bad a job in geographic spread in California--partly because there were plenty of rich people in the countryside, so that you could spread power lines much further, in spite of long distances, than they did in other parts of the country. So the issue of service was not as good an issue for us in California as it was, say, in Texas, where they skim the cream and let the little guy go without electricity. California was much more built up in the rural areas. The little guys up the forks of the creek were just not so many, compared to those that were concentrated in agricultural and industrial communities. So that issue was not as easy for us there as it was elsewhere.

PG & E was pretty formidable, plus the fact that they, together with the other large corporations like the Southern Pacific, had been used to running California pretty much their own way. All the same people that Hiram [W.] Johnson screamed about were still pretty much in the saddle. PG & E, as is the case in most private utilities, sort of carry the ball for private enterprise.

They carry the ball for all the other big industrialists, partly because the power industry doesn't require a great deal of true management. You know, anybody can manage a utility. We've proved it. Even farmers getting together can manage a utility perfectly well. Most of the utility executives' time is spent lobbying and mucking around with the system with the politicians; playing at Burning Tree golf courses and their moral equivalents in California, with politicians. They spend most of their time on political activities, partly because their industry really is quite simple to run! You just turn off the electricity if people don't pay their bills. [Laughter]

- Fry: And that brings them in quick.
- Goldschmidt: It brings the money in quick.
- Fry: I'm specifically interested in the issue of whether the federal government would lease PG & E's lines from the Central



- Fry: Valley Project's power dams, and whether it would then sell electricity directly to the communities, or whether it would let PG & E do that. I'm also intrigued to see if Helen, as a member of the California delegation, had anything to do with this.
- Goldschmidt: That had become an issue, the use of the PG & E lines as a means of "wheeling" the power, rather than build duplicating lines owned by the government. I'm not very clear on where that issue has moved in California. I just haven't, frankly, kept up with it.
- Fry: At the time--?
- Goldschmidt: At the time, that was their big argument. But it always was the argument, that you shouldn't build duplicating lines. There's a certain economic argument that has some validity, although quite frankly, it has more validity in theory, rather than in practice. Duplicating lines would require consumers to pay for building, maintaining and operating two facilities where one would do the job-- and transmission is one of the big cost elements in electric power. But in practice the utilities get away with charges that obliterate such differences. For example, even the distribution lines in a city like Seattle, where you have both private and public power, these lines, as well as everything else, have been duplicated; but the power was actually sold to the customer cheaper than any other place in the country. It still is. Even though everything has to be doubled, by having competition you get it cheaper whether it's publicly owned or privately owned. I've often thought that what we really ought to do in this country is to have a completely duplicating system of public and private power, right across the board, to keep everybody on their toes, keep some of these people off the golf courses, on both sides.
- But duplicating lines in California--PG & E made a big fuss about that. Then, one of their compromises would be the renting of space on their lines to wheel the power to the small co-ops and the small cities that want to have public power. I don't know where that stands now in California.
- Fry: Do you recall Helen taking part in any of that, as legislation? It did become an issue in some of the legislation.
- Goldschmidt: After refreshing my memory through my files, I am aware that Helen was very deeply involved in the battle to keep PG & E from taking over the Central Valley Project power on their own terms in 1944 and 1945. She kept at this issue in the House



Goldschmidt: and on the hustings. Some of the documentation can be put in the appendix.

### Moving Into International Affairs

#### Fact-Finding Mission for the Marshall Plan

Goldschmidt: In 1947, when I got involved in the Marshall Plan, I got much less involved in the power issues.

Fry: Would you review how you got involved in the Marshall Plan, for the benefit of the tape recorder?

Goldschmidt: Quite simply, when [George C.] Marshall made a speech in '47, two very distinguished Americans worried publicly about the idea of giving aid to Europe. One of them was Herbert Hoover, and the other was Bernie [Bernard M.] Baruch. Herbert Hoover thought it would cost too much, and Bernie Baruch had a more fuzzy reason to worry which had to do with our draining our resource base. "Cap" [Julius W.] Krug, who was then Secretary of the Interior, was asked to head up an interdepartmental study to look into our resource base to see whether we could afford to provide these resources to Europe. Krug called me in and said, "I want you to undertake the study, be in charge of the writing of it."

I said, "You know, Cap, I'm no longer an economist."

He said, "Well, you're the nearest thing we've got to an economist. You have to do it."

So we got together a whole group of people from Commerce, Agriculture, the Federal Reserve and other federal agencies; we set up a huge interdepartmental machinery for getting the facts. We put out the first official study on the Marshall proposal. That Marshall speech was in June. By the fall, we had put out a comprehensive study on the effects on our resources of a massive foreign aid program,\* I got the Distinguished Service Medal from Interior for mostly my part in this study.

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\* "National Resources and Foreign Aid, Report of J.A. Krug, Secretary of the Interior, October 9, 1947." 97 (+viii)pages, Government Printing Office.

Goldschmidt: As a result of that, I became a member for Interior for a lot of interdepartmental committees. These committees were chaired by State. I was on the Executive Committee for Economic Foreign Policy and a whole bunch of other committees, including ultimately the committee that was set up to plan the Point-Four Program, after Truman made his famous Point-Four speech in '49. I worked on that from the beginning of the foreign aid program.

Well, I had absolutely no foreign experience. I had been concerned with internal development projects. I sat on that committee and worked very closely with it and then I was loaned by Interior to the U.N. [United Nations] to help set up their aid program in '50. That's how I got involved.

Fry: Helen was on the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

Goldschmidt: I guess I knew about those things that Helen was very excited about--the U.N. at that time, and she was very strong for using the U.N. more. I think she was fairly close to [Fiorello H.] LaGuardia's staff, the UNRRA [United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration]. She was really big for that. I guess I heard about all that. I remember her coming back from that first General Assembly of the U.N. and being so excited. She said, "You know, the level of debate there is as different from our congressional debate as the congressional debate is from the state legislature," or something like that. I must say, it may have been true at that time! [Laughs]

Fry: It's kind of gone downhill since then.

Goldschmidt: I'm not sure that it's true anymore, but she was terribly excited about the kind of discussion.

Fry: This was the first general session?

Goldschmidt: The first General Assembly.

#### Early Problems of Atomic Energy Control: Douglas's Role and the Young Physicists

Goldschmidt: The other thing I remember Helen's interest getting involved with, certainly in discussions about, is atomic energy. I remember talking to her and Jim [James R.] Newman, a mathematician who wrote very well. He's written a three-volume book on math education. He was on her committee staff, a marvelous man. I was meeting a lot of that crowd, either through her or

- Goldschmidt: directly, because our electric power connections brought a lot of the physicists to see me about atomic energy. I was very concerned about the possible economic impact of atomic energy on our big water projects, and whether it would mean that water power was no longer viable.
- Fry: Yes. I thought maybe for that reason that in the atomic energy bill that Helen was working on, which was the McMahon-Douglas bill--was there ever any thought of putting it under the Department of Interior, and in the power division there, in the efforts to prevent it from getting under the control of the military?
- Goldschmidt: Oh, I don't think so, I don't think that ever came up. But I think there was considerable talk about the idea that the sale of atomic power ought to be handled in the same way as our big public power projects were.
- Fry: Like TVA [Tennessee Valley Authority]?
- Goldschmidt: Yes, or the Interior projects, in terms of insuring that the benefits of it would be publicly available. I think that the atomic energy act was a Pyrrhic victory, really. I mean, it got it out of the hands of the army, but it never really got into the hands of any outfit that had adequate consciousness about fully protecting the public interest in its development.
- Fry: Why didn't it?
- Goldschmidt: I don't know. I think part of it was the cold war, part of it was the secrecy syndrome that started up at that time. It's very odd that in spite of the fact that you had people like [David E.] Lilienthal there in charge, and that sort of thing, that the issue of public and private ownership or better phrased, public and private benefit distribution-- You know, the issue isn't, in my view, ownership. I don't give a damn who owns what. I mean, I'm not an ideologue about public ownership of power, for instance. But I think it is generally a perfectly rational way of handling the power problem. It's a question of who gets the benefits either way. It seems to me that at the time the problem as it was seen by all these fine people was simply to keep it out of the military! That came largely, I think, from all the young physicists who had gotten fed to the teeth with the military. I don't blame them a bit, because what I ran into on that issue made me feel that they were a bunch of jerks in dealing with scientists and public policy issues.
- Fry: The army engineers?



Goldschmidt: Yes. We, in Interior had our own problems with them at about that time. Since we, like the Army Corps of Engineers, were involved in planning further large power developments, we felt it important to know how soon and how cheaply atomic power might compete with our programs. When we tried to find out about this simple important question, we got nowhere. It was largely the matter of "security," though it may have also been to hide ignorance. Even with Ickes pushing, we had a hard time; indeed we never got very far even when Krug replaced Ickes and, being a close friend of Lilienthal's, arranged a meeting with him at which I was present. Before that, as I said, Ickes pushed hard on this question and after much hoopla, my chief engineer and I were finally admitted to the presence, through several locked doors. I don't remember what all we had to do to get there. The young colonel whom we saw, Nichols, I believe it was, discussed the power possibilities of atomic energy. He became a very important guy later. He was one of the top people in the Manhattan Project. He gave us a kind of a Sunday-supplement lecture on atomic energy, in which he explained how it was produced, which we already knew from newspapers. [Laughs] In discussing it, I remember he said to me that there are some "unstable" scientists who think we will also be able to make atomic energy through fusion--that is, distinguished from fission. He explained why that would be, on the periodic table of elements.

I said, "Colonel, you mentioned the 'unstable'--"

He said, "You know, some of these far-out guys."

I said, "Wasn't it the less stable scientists who produced atomic energy in the first place?" He was very polite. [Mimics timid voice] "Yes, Mr. Goldschmidt, I guess you're right, you're quite right!" But you know, it's that kind of attitude--very conservative, very stuffy, very unresponsive to any sense of public benefits, or peoples' benefits that thinks in terms of the nation versus the people rather than that people are the nation. I think there's a mentality there that fails to see that the benefits of public investment in research and development should be widely shared by the people.

When [James O.] McMahon and Helen were worrying about this thing, it was really the physicists who pressed them on. The pressure came from the people that had been released from the atomic projects, that had been sprung after their incarceration on the reservations set up to produce atomic weapons. It was a fascinating thing. They all came to Washington to try to do something. That story should be written. I don't know if it ever has been.

Fry: Well, they must have had the time to come to Washington.

Goldschmidt: They were a bunch of youngsters, many of them. I remember some young girl came. I guess she had just had her doctorate when she got in there. They were all young people, mostly young people, with a great sense of guilt, a sense of concern, a sense of having been involved in something they barely understood. They had nicknames for things. They called it the new Nova project, on the theory that you could explain the Nova by someone up there having discovered atomic energy and blown themselves up. This concern had to direct itself against an enemy, and I think the army was the natural enemy. I'm not sure that's great logically. Somebody really ought to write that story.

Fry: That's interesting as a social phenomenon, their behavior at that point in history.

Goldschmidt: That's when they set up that Chicago group, the political group, which began The Journal of Atomic Scientists. It's a very interesting phenomenon. They just swarmed over Washington. They were not particularly well organized.

Fry: I was going to ask you if it was a formal organization, and did they get funds? How did they eat and live and pay their rent?

Goldschmidt: I don't know. They probably all had made more money than they'd ever had in their lives, and they couldn't spend it out there in Los Alamos or wherever they were hiding out, so they probably had nice fat nest eggs. I think they did raise a little money. I remember a group when I went to see my friend Carolyn Agger Fortas, who's a great tax lawyer. [Spells name] Her husband [Abe] was later on the Supreme Court. They were great friends of ours. Carol told a funny story about several of these people who wanted to set up an organization coming to her. They needed to get a lawyer to help them draft up the charter and rules and to tell them what they could and couldn't do.

She said, "What do you want to do? Do you want to raise money? What is the purpose of the organization? Are you going to do lobbying?"

One of them said, "What's lobbying?"

Carol said, "Lobbying is getting Congress to do something, going up and appearing before Congress." She explained to them what lobbying was.



- Goldschmidt: And they said, "Yes, that's what we want to do." She had to explain that. Of course, that affected their tax status. They went on, but the point of the story is, as they were leaving, one of them turned to Carol and said, "Miss Agger, could you give us a reference to a good textbook on lobbying?" [Laughter] It was that type of folks that was there, you see. They didn't even know the word, much less how to go about it. Boy, they sure did a job! But they had the wholesale fear of the atom in the public mind in their favor.
- Fry: Yes, which was pretty widespread.
- Goldschmidt: But except for watching the effort to develop policy on atomic matters as a phenomenon, I really had very little to do with that. I listened to how Helen and Jim Newman and all the others felt about it. I don't recall having any input into it, although maybe I did in conversation.
- Fry: Who would be a good person to talk to?
- Goldschmidt: Gosh, Jim Newman is dead, and I don't remember off hand any others.
- Fry: There must be someone who's probably now in Berkeley who was a part of that group. I just wonder who it might be.
- Goldschmidt: You might ask Helen. She remembers names.
- Fry: It's hard to trace. We could try.
- Goldschmidt: Of course, I think the atomic energy cause turned out to be insignificant. The whole thing was a curious failure, you know, compared to our early expectations. In the first place, one of the failures has been among the physicists themselves. At the time that they came to Washington, right after the war, they had all kinds of theories about what was going to happen in physics to produce energy. One of the people, who was a very serious physicist, insisted that the big breakthrough would come in fifteen years when they produced electricity directly from atom fission. In other words, not using the atom simply as a heat source.

As soon as I learned that, all they were going to do was to replace coal, I didn't worry about my dams anymore. I just forgot atomic energy as a competitor to the building of water power plants because you have to shield it and have all kinds of expensive protective devices. Even if the atomic materials were free, it wouldn't produce power as cheap as water power because you'd have all the investment in steam plants, trans-



Goldschmidt: mission and so on.

[end tape 1, side B; begin tape 2, side A]

Water power is very cheap. Except for the capital costs, there really isn't much to it. Actually, the pricing of our electricity power has been more of a political act than an economic act.

In the second place, the big issue of that time--to put atomic energy under civilian control--was also not successful in terms of public policy. I'm just not happy with where we stand today. [Laughs] I don't think the answer is to get it out of the military and put it in the hands of people equally secretive and equally obsessed with the maintenance of or the strengthening of industrial controls over the benefits of the development of atomic power. Of course, I'm always troubled about any effort on the part of government to regulate. It just doesn't work after the first few years. It hasn't worked in power, it hasn't worked in railroads, it hasn't worked in telecommunications. You know, the regulatees become the regulators of the regulators who get in control. That seems to happen. That's why my great belief in competition. I believe, for instance, we did much better in telecommunications when we had two telegraph services. As soon as they were permitted to combine, telegraph service disappeared in this country effectively. It got expensive and ridiculous.

But in the days when we had postal and Western Union, you could really get a telegram sent out, and cheap. With all the modern gimmicks, you ought to be able to do it even cheaper now, but it's a monopoly. Take airplanes. Give an airplane operator a monopoly on a run, and the consumer has had it! Put two lines on the same run, and you get all kinds of benefits.

#### Congresswoman Douglas

#### The "Georgetown Circuit"

Fry: I wish you could give me some idea of Helen's social life in Washington when you first knew her there. My impression from talking to her is that she was terribly busy.

Goldschmidt: Yes. I don't really remember too much about her [pause for

Goldschmidt: loud noise] because all of us were very busy. Our social life usually consisted of taking our office concerns around to each other's houses for dinner [laughs] and talking all night about whatever it was that concerned us. Helen's kids went to the same school, I think, that our children went to. At any rate, Mary Helen went to camp with our children, up near where our country place is now in upper New York state.

We'd run into Helen in connection with the school and camp, and what then was the "Georgetown circuit." We all lived in Georgetown--Helen did, and we did. Usually, I think we just sort of met to talk politics. [Laughs] I'd have something I'd want her to get interested in, and I'd go up and see her at the house, and her office in the House. I'd send her up material, which I did a lot, on issues that I was interested in. Sometimes she'd ask me for my views on something. But we would see her socially, at parties and things, or at dinners. We'd have her over. I remember Helen when Mel came back and appeared in that little postwar review called Call Me Mister. It opened in Philadelphia, and Helen had a whole party go up from Washington. We were at that party. We were invited and we went up by train with the group from Washington to Philadelphia and back to see Mel. It wasn't the opening, of course; it was the tryout in Philadelphia. I think we saw it again in Washington. It was that sort of a review, just after the war.

Fry: Yes, based on the theme of a postwar return to normalcy, and lieutenants and privates getting out and being civilians again.

Goldschmidt: I don't know how many people, who went--a dozen people.

I remember when she ran for the Senate, she called me up and told me that [W. Averell] Harriman was going to make a speech for her for her campaign, and that a group of people were going to work on it all one Saturday, and would I be willing to pitch in and join them? I did, and we worked in Harriman's offices. We all stayed for a while, and then we had lunch with him at this house. We talked to him about what he should say about Helen. She wanted to be sure that it didn't stray too far from her own views on things. [Laughs] She thought that Harriman was a little bit more likely to be to the right of her on some issues. She wanted to be sure that on the water and power issues, at least, he didn't say anything that would embarrass her. He went out to California to make a big speech for her campaign; he was one of the few top people in government at the time. I've always loved and admired him for making this speech. Harriman is now, like all old men, considered to have been right all the time, but he



Goldschmidt: wasn't. But on Helen he was right, very much so. He was one of the few people that was willing to stick his neck out for her.

But he's always been willing to stick his neck out--off and on. Not always for such good causes! I'm an admirer of Harriman too, but one forgets that he wasn't always one of the most New Dealish of the New Dealers. It was a matter of considerable importance that he did come out for her out there. Looking back, he didn't have any reason not to, but at the time, it was an important thing that he did it.

Fry: Were you at all involved in that campaign?

Goldschmidt: No, except for this one thing. I suppose I gave her material or something on various issues.

#### Close Associates; Reflections on Lyndon B. Johnson

Fry: I wonder, back in the halls of the House Office Building, if you noticed any differences between Helen's office and the way she ran it, and some of the others. Can you distill some distinguishing characteristics?

Goldschmidt: No, I couldn't. I wasn't that close to it, or to many others. I mean, I knew Lyndon Johnson's office in his early days, and I knew a few other offices, but I really can't remember any distinguishing features. I think Evie [Evelyn] Chavoor was the main distinction. People had their close personal assistants doing the heavy duties, after all. John [B.] Connally was Lyndon B. Johnson's assistant for a while.

Fry: Before I turned on the tape recorder, you said that Lyndon Johnson was one of the congressmen with whom Helen frequently worked closely. I wanted to ask you more about that.

Goldschmidt: You see, when Johnson came to the House, he came from a very liberal district. He was a very liberal congressman. He did a wonderful job for his constituents--both on the power issue (that's where I knew him well), then in housing and every other field. He always saw to it that the Tenth District in Texas was in the forefront of every activity that the federal government was espousing for voting or helping to finance. I'm sure that Helen must have learned a lot from him, because he was a politician to his fingertips, and he knew how to get things done. They would have been on the same side of many issues at



Goldschmidt: that time, which might not have been true a little later.

At the time before the '60 convention, I was at a dinner party at Helen's with a very nice Frenchman, a friend of both of ours from the U.N. He made a slightly pejorative comment about Johnson as a candidate for the presidency--he'd be too conservative or something. Helen jumped on him and said, "You know, that isn't true. Johnson would be a liberal president! I worked with him in the House, and he was good on liberal issues." She said, "In the Senate he had to help the fat cats, get their support, and he had Texas, which is a reactionary state; so he had to trim his position. But as soon as he gets a national constituency, he'll be on our side."

Of course, that's the same case that Doris Kearns makes in her book on Johnson. I liked the book. She makes this point about Johnson. I remember the thing Wicky [Elizabeth Wickenden Goldschmidt] told you before you turned on the tape. When we were seeing Johnson just after the assassination, we had dinner with him before he actually moved into the White House, when they were still at The Elms. That evening he said, "Well, I'm in this place because of Helen Douglas."

We said, "How is that?"

He said, "Everybody said I shouldn't run for Vice-President, that it was a ridiculous job. I felt that I couldn't see this man Nixon in the White House, and I had to do anything I could to keep him out. I figured that because of the way he behaved toward Helen Douglas in 1950 he should not be president."

Of course, Johnson wrote history in terms of his auditors, anyway. Helen's reaction was typical. Now here's someone who liked Johnson and defended him, as I said just a minute ago, yet when we told her the story, her reply was, "I've heard that one before. He's probably said it so often now that he really believes it himself." [Laughs]

Fry: As a motivation to run?

Goldschmidt: Yes. I guess that in Miss Kearns' book, you do get some of a similar feeling about Johnson which is I think well documented. He was very, very sympathetic with whoever he was talking to. He had a great sense of how you felt about something. He knew that a statement like that would please Wicky and me; we were the guests there.

Wicky wanted me to tell you one other case. When Johnson was majority leader, I think it was, when we had Jim [James]

Goldschmidt: Rowe working for him on civil rights legislations, Johnson had always argued that the big issue in civil rights was getting the blacks the vote. He had his own bill, in the Eisenhower administration. When I happened to see him at that time he gave me a draft of his proposal. He asked me whether I would show it to some of my "radical" friends in New York. I said, "Who the hell do you mean by my 'radical' friends?"

He said, "Oh, people like Ralph [J.] Bunche and Helen Douglas and folks like that." [Laughs]

I did bring it and show it to Helen, Telford Taylor, and Ralph Bunche and several other people. I wrote him a letter about it. Their reaction was that it was favorable on the whole, except they wanted to be sure that it wasn't in lieu of some of the other demands they were making and that it wasn't a compromise, which I suspect it was. But I did send it to Helen.

Fry: You did?

Goldschmidt: Yes, I sent it to Helen. I'd have to get that correspondence. I don't know where to find it.

Fry: If you get your hands on it, it would be interesting.

Goldschmidt: I was then working for the U.N. I just did this because he asked me to.

Fry: Were there other congressmen who were especially close to Helen? Do you remember any?

Goldschmidt: Chet [Chester E.] Holifield was a good one. I suppose there were just a slew of them in Helen's crowd. She was a very attractive gal. I would have thought that she would have multitudes of people [laughs] willing to help her out, quite aside from politics. She's a very warm and sympathetic person.

Fry: Did you get the idea that she worked harder than the average congressman?

Goldschmidt: Yes. She was at it pretty much all the time, but not more than someone like Lyndon, who just lived and breathed what he did. I think she worked very hard. Was it Heywood [H.] Broun that called Helen "the ten most beautiful women in America"?

Fry: It was one of those columnists.

Goldschmidt: She really was, you know. She was a terribly good-looking

Goldschmidt: gal in those days. Did you know her at all then?

Fry: No, I didn't.

Goldschmidt: We have her picture on the wall from her congressional days. My God, she was beautiful. She has this kind of glow, you know, of excitement. She could get you interested in anything, I think. It's sort of a curious mixture of self-assurance with the willingness to listen to somebody else, and a desire to get information from people that she thought knew more than she did, which was a nice combination.

Fry: Was she a pretty good learner when she attacked a new field like water resources?

Goldschmidt: Oh, she worked at it, yes. Yes, I think she was pretty quick. I mean, she got the essence of things very quickly. Whether she got the details, or had to study or not, I don't know what her system was. She usually got pretty well up on things. She didn't bypass too much. She was a very nice person to deal with, also. Very gracious about your contribution.

#### A Beautiful Friendship

Goldschmidt: I think we've pretty much covered everything. The only other thing I'd like to say to you--you know, we had a daughter who was quite a person--our youngest who was killed in an automobile accident about five years ago with her husband. She was a writer. She had published in the Atlantic Monthly. She was a very interesting child.

Fry: What was her name?

Goldschmidt: Jean Goldschmidt. She was just in her mid-twenties when she passed on. Well, Helen just sort of moved in on us. She brought food, and came, and was here. It was great for both of us.

Fry: She knew that she was needed, and just came.

Goldschmidt: She just does it. There's been all sorts of times. She really is an extraordinary person to do things like that. She knew Jeanie very well, since she was a little baby. Jeanie was always interesting and a somewhat difficult child, and Helen took such enormous interest in her. Maybe it was just a gesture of friendship, a human thing. It was just something



- Goldschmidt: that very few people do. People come, or call up, or write notes or something, but Helen just sort of threw herself into the breach.
- Fry: In a very total way of involvement.
- Goldschmidt: Yes, that's right. Mel came along with her once or twice, but this was more than just a friendly call. This was sort of taking over.
- Fry: And running your lives at a time when you two were still incapable of doing it, in a crisis situation like that. Otherwise, you did have a lot of social contact with the Douglasses after she got out of Congress.
- Goldschmidt: They have been over here a lot, and we've been over there. They had parties with lots of people around. We'd been there on various occasions--Thanksgiving, Christmas. We had a big party for our twentieth wedding anniversary, and Helen sang her lieder. That was in her lieder period, when she was thinking of going back to singing after her political career.
- Fry: That was nineteen-fifty-what?
- Goldschmidt: It must have been 1953.
- Fry: Do you ever visit them in Vermont?
- Goldschmidt: We have, when I've got the time. We have a place in the country. She's been to that, too. We've always tried to get them up there. She was up there with us one time.
- Fry: Did you work together on any of Helen's pet political issues after 1950?
- Goldschmidt: No, not really. Until recently, I was pretty well tied up in my own work. I was in a position where it would have been inappropriate for me to do it with her. For instance, I never went to Washington, when I was an international civil servant, at Lyndon Johnson's call without talking to the Secretary-General first and seeing it was all right for me to do it.
- Fry: To see your own president?
- Goldschmidt: That's right. I treated the situation very much at arm's length. He asked me there. But I didn't want to have anyone confused as to what my role was. Later, when he appointed me as U.S. Ambassador to the U.N., that was different. That wasn't until '66.

Fry: During this period, did Helen ever work with you at all on any of the U.N. issues that you were concerned with, or talk to you about them?

Goldschmidt: I guess we talked about them, sure, but not very much.

Fry: You don't remember any special incident.

Goldschmidt: No.

I think we've covered it.

Fry: All right. I'll go on to your wife. Thank you.

Transcriber: Leslie Goodman-Malamuth  
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CURRICULUM VITAEARTHUR GOLDSCHMIDT

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Born February 17, 1910 in San Antonio, Texas

EDUCATION:

Public Schools of San Antonio  
 1928-1932 Columbia University, New York  
 1932 AB (Economics and Political Science)  
 1932-1933 Graduate Studies at Columbia University

EXPERIENCE:

1973- Consultant  
 1969-Present: Senior Consultant to Administrator, United Nations Development Program  
 1969-1970 Visiting Fellow, Council on Foreign Relations  
 1967-1969 U.S. Representative on the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations with rank of Ambassador  
 1959-1966 Director, Special Fund Operations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations  
 1958-1959 Director, Bureau of Technical Assistance Operations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations  
 1954-1958 Director, Programme Division, Technical Assistance Administration, United Nations  
 1957-1958 On leave as Chief, UN Mission on Resources and Industry to Iran  
 1950-1954 Director, Co-ordination and Planning, Technical Assistance Administration, United Nations  
 1947-1950 Special Assistant to the Secretary, Department of the Interior Washington, D.C.  
 1947-1950 Member, Executive Committee on Economic and Foreign Policy  
 1949-1950 " Advisory Committee on Technical Assistance  
 1948-1949 " Preparatory Committee on UN Scientific Conference on Conservation and Utilization of Resources  
 1949 " U.S. Delegation to the UN Scientific Conference on Conservation and Utilization of Resources  
 1949 " U.S. National Commission for UNESCO  
 1950 Adviser, U.S. Delegation to Geneva ECOSOC



1942-1947 Director, Division of Power, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C.  
 1941-1942 Assistant Director, Division of Power  
 1940-1941 Special Assistant to Chairman, Power Policy Committee, Washington, D.C.  
 1938-1940 Assistant to Director, Power Division, Public Works Administration, Washington, D.C.  
 1937-1938 Assistant to Consumer Counsel, National Bituminous Coal Commission, Washington, D.C.  
 1936-1937 Special Assistant: Senate Committee on Interstate Commerce, Railroad Investigation, Washington, D.C.  
 1933-1936 Various posts including Director of Professional Projects in Federal Emergency Relief Administration, Civil Works Administration and Works Program Administration, Washington, D.C.  
 1932-1933 Assistant to President, Emergency Exchange Association in New York

PERSONAL:

Distinguished Service Award, Department of the Interior, 1949

Member: Board of Directors, VITA; Society for International Development; Association for the Preservation of Durham Valley; Delta Phi.

Married to Elizabeth Wickenden May 1933. Three children.

PUBLICATIONS:

"Resources and Resourcefulness", address to American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Bulletin, Vol. II, No. 5, Boston 1949.

"International Rivers", contribution to symposium on Integrated Development of River Basins. Proceedings, Vol. I, UN Scientific Conference on the Conservation and Utilization of Resources. United Nations 1950, p.402

"Relation of Conservation to Development", contributed to symposium on the UN Conference, ibid. p.415.

"Program Planning and Development" Partners for Progress. Annals of the American Society of Political and Social Sciences, Vol. 323. Philadelphia, May 1959.

"Technology in Emerging Countries", contributed to Encyclopaedia Britannica's conference on the Technological Order. Technology and Culture, Vol. III, No.4, Fall 1962.

"The Development of the U.S. South", Scientific American, Vol. 205, No. 3, Sept. 1963.

PUBLICATIONS - continued

"The Role of Regional and International Co-operation in the Development of South-east Asia", contribution to the Wingspread Conference. The Prospect for South-east Asia - Praeger 1966.

"The Mekong and International Development Assistance". India Journal of Power and River Basin Development. Vol. XVI, New Delhi, 1966.

"Food Aid in the Perspective of Problems of Developing Countries". Department of State Bulletin. Vol. LVII, No. 1471, September 4, 1967.

"The Protein Problems and National Development", ibid. Vol. LIX, No. 1539, December 23, 1968.

"International Organizations and Economic Development" - review of the "Jackson Report". International Affairs. Vol. XXIV, No. 2, 1970.

In addition, delivered numerous speeches before UN bodies, including the General Assembly, ECOSOC, the Governing Council of the UNDP, ECAFE and ECE, as well as to public gatherings, and wrote or edited reports for the U.S. Government such as "National Resources and Foreign Aid" (1947) and the United Nations, including reports on the Mission to Iran (1958).

my friend, Helen

HELEN GAHAGAN

December 22, 1943

Mr. Arthur Goldschmidt  
U. S. Department of Interior  
Office of the Secretary  
Division of Power  
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Mr. Goldschmidt:

Thank you for your nice letter. I have just written the Secretary as a follow up to my telegram urging that he come January 28 and speak before the Commonwealth Club. How would it be to arrange a dinner for that same evening? I think it might be very productive to have a hundred leading liberals gathered around and let the Secretary talk to them, and I do hope he will find it possible to go through the San Joaquin Valley.

I, too, enjoyed the evening we all spent together.

With all good wishes,

Sincerely,

Helen Gahagan  
Helen Gahagan



Central File

25, D. C.

Air Mail

April 28, 1945.

Dr. Paul S. Taylor,  
1163 Euclid Avenue,  
Berkeley 8, California.

Dear Paul:

I have your letters and agree with your complaint about coordination. The fact is that this whole matter was sprung on the Department by the Committee with no notice. However, California came through beautifully. Helen Douglas did a magnificent job of pulling the California delegation together on this matter and made an excellent speech in the Record. She and I have been working closely together and I am even more impressed than I was when you first introduced me to her. You folks ought to encourage her because she certainly deserves a hand. Incidentally, when she got through making her fighting speech she got a hand from her colleagues and from the gallery. Both A.F. of L. and C.I.O. telegrams came in in adequate time and indeed the response from California was magnificent. The delegation felt that an effort to get an amendment on the Floor of the House would fail because so many liberal Congressmen are out of town. For that reason the Record is just one of raising cane about the cut in the appropriations and the tenor of the Committee report. We will have no difficulty getting an item back in the Senate and I think the education that the House got on the subject will result in concurrence with Senate action when the bill goes to conference or comes back to the House Floor.

With respect to getting your clipping to Abe I suggest you get hold of him at the St. Francis. He knows McCloy well. You ought to see him. He is there as advisor on trusteeships. I also suggest that you talk to Abe on Hetch Hetchy. The REA matter is still in abeyance. The River Valley authorities are going to come in for some hard sladding, even though President Truman is on the record strongly in favor of them.

Since my friend Roger did far and away the best job of speech making at the conference I am inclined to take up your suggestion.

Sincerely yours,

Sgd. Arthur Goldschmidt

Arthur Goldschmidt,  
Director.

THE P. G. & E. CONTRACT

Much has been said about a power contract between the Pacific Gas and Electric Company and the Government for the disposition of Shasta Dam power.

That contract is a wartime contract. It is based upon the present curtailed installation at Shasta Dam. It is based upon only two of the five generators at Shasta Dam and does not provide for power from Keswick Dam where generators are not yet installed. I do not criticize this contract. It was probably as good a contract as the Government could have made with incomplete power installations, without a transmission system, and with only a single customer in the area of the Dam. It was necessary to use this power for war purposes. But the contract was a war contract, an emergency contract and it should not be used as a longrun basis of Federal power policy in the Central Valley. Under that contract the Government receives less than 3-1/3 mills per kilowatt hour from the Company for Shasta power. Under rate schedules that have been released for the sale of Central Valley power generally to public agencies, the Government will receive an average of over 5 mills. In other words the completion of the facilities and the sale of this power generally in the area will mean a greater return to the Government for its power. The cities in California that buy wholesale power from the P.G. & E. Company do not get it now at 5 mills. They pay more than 7 mills for this power. Bulletin No. 1 of the Water Projects Authority of the State of California notes that, I quote, "the cost per kilowatt hour of electric energy purchased by the cities in 1939 varied from 7.8 mills for Redding to 11.2 mills for Biggs."



The wartime contract with the Pacific Gas and Electric Company makes Shasta power available to the war industries and other uses of California. It was a necessary arrangement and a sound one for the period of the war. But we know that all of our wartime arrangements should not be frozen into permanence. Wisely, this contract is limited to the war period and a reasonable time for adjustment thereafter. It will terminate on December 31, 1947 or two years after the war.

The contract was made possible only because the power from Shasta was not fully installed. With the full installation at Shasta and Keswick, existing transmission lines of the Company will not be adequate to carry the heavy power that is available. New transmission facilities will be necessary. They will not duplicate existing lines any more than the second freight car in a loaded train duplicates the first. Both are essential. The question is who shall own and control these additional facilities and for whose benefit shall they be built and operated?

The people own Shasta and Keswick. They should also own the outlets to the market. They should own transmission lines so that in those sites where the people have decided to distribute their own power, they may do so without asking the permission of and paying a toll to any private utility. A large number of cities in California distribute their own power. They have the right under state law to do so. They also have a right under state law, under Federal law and under the law of reason and common sense to get that power from their own dams over their own transmission lines.

That is the simple fact in this case. The Government's interest and the people's interests will be served best by an independent power operation in the Central Valley, not by a scheme that depends on the magnanimity of a single utility but a system that permits the people access to their own power at these great dams that we have built.



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HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS PROJECT

Elizabeth Wickenden Goldschmidt

HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS: SOCIAL LEGISLATION, FAMILY, AND FRIENDS

An Interview Conducted by  
Amelia Fry  
in 1976

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Elizabeth Wickenden





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IV HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS: SOCIAL LEGISLATION, FAMILY,  
AND FRIENDS

[Interview 1: June 30, 1976]  
[continue tape 2, side A]

Elizabeth Wickenden and Helen Douglas: A Professional Partnership

Advising Helen Douglas on Social Security Legislation

Wickenden: I'll go chronologically, if you want me to.

Fry: Fine.

Wickenden: In the time that Helen was in the Congress, I had a role with respect to public welfare programs and social security. My job was to be Washington representative of the American Public Welfare Association, which is the organization of state and local welfare departments, for people who work in them.

In that job I was primarily involved with questions of public assistance. But I also took on a role with respect to social security, and at that time--or part of that time, anyway--the AFL [American Federation of Labor] and the CIO [Congress of Industrial Organizations] were separate organizations. They were the principal supporters of social security legislation, but they could never talk with each other, or meet together, unless a third person stood by them! [Laughter] So I became that third person. I took on a sort of coordinating and convening role with respect to social security legislation, on which I really was less knowledgeable than I am--or was--about public assistance. That's the background.

Of course, I had one other connection with Helen that I might mention. My husband [Arthur Goldschmidt] may have told

- Wickenden: you that before she came to Congress, she was interested in a whole series of social issues. One of them was young people and the National Youth Administration. Before I had the job I described to you, I worked for the National Youth Administration. So I think there was some bond there.
- Fry: You knew her then?
- Wickenden: Just indirectly. I really cannot remember precisely when I first met Helen, but I'm certain it's when she came to Washington. I had no reason to know her in California. Well, I did go to California once. Her husband, Melvyn Douglas, was on the board of social welfare in California.
- Fry: Did that put you in contact with him?
- Wickenden: Well, only very lightly. [Laughs] I went to California to do some things during the war years, or the preparation for war years. I met him at that time, but I didn't go to their house. I don't think I met Helen until she came to Washington.

In any event, when things came up in Congress that involved social security, she would be very likely to call on me for advice, or if she didn't call on me for advice, I would be likely to tell her what I thought she ought to do. In the course of that relationship, she became extremely supportive of the social security program. She was one of the people, obviously, that we counted on. You have in your chronology some of the bills on which I'm sure I advised her. There was the Gearhart Amendment, that took 750,000 people out from under social security in 1948. Congressman [Bertrand W.] Gearhart was a Republican from California. If I recall that particular bill correctly it had to do with people who worked on commissions, like insurance salesmen and so forth, that they should not be counted as employees. It was the first time anyone had put in a bill a section which had the effect of reducing social security coverage. Most of the bills that passed in the forties and early fifties were bills to extend coverage. So far as I can recall it, Helen supported all those bills to extend coverage.

I think partly because of our close relationship, she was much more supportive of social security than the rest of the California delegation, which brings me to the one really unique and amusing relationship that I had with Helen which I think is not on your list of topics.

## Dealing with George McLain

Wickenden: California, because of its background with Townsend and other advocates of old-age pensions, had always been a pension state. The basic difference between a pension and social security is the fact that social security is a contributory program, and its benefits are based on past contributions and are related to earnings, whereas the pension program is thought of as a straight-out flat monthly sum, supported by general taxes.

As I say, California has had these pension clubs, Townsend clubs. I think the last time I saw Townsend in Washington, he was something like ninety-four. [Laughter]

Fry: And he was still lobbying?

Wickenden: Yes. He was a very influential person with the old people of California. Of course, California has a disproportionate number of old people because, at least in those days, a great many people went there to retire. I don't know if that is still as true now as it was then.

After Townsend had died, there was another man, George McLain, who moved into the vacuum in the 1940s and became a great power in California politics. He had an organization of old people. In some respects, he really held the balance of power in California politics. For instance, he got passed on the ballot an amendment to the state constitution, naming Myrtle Williams, the secretary of his organization, to be the head of the department of welfare--one of the crazier uses of our electoral system. [Laughter] Later on, he got passed another provision by referendum that gave old-age assistance the first claim on the state funds. This was a very dangerous provision, and it went into the constitution also.

Fry: The first amendment you mentioned didn't stay in very long.

Wickenden: No, and neither did the second. I was going to tell you about the second one, because it's an interesting little sidelight on political events. The school people, the Parent Teacher Association in California, became very alarmed at this position in the constitution, because it meant that the old people had a prior claim over the schools and they were no longer on an even-handed basis. They were afraid that McLain, with his strong organization, would up the old-age benefits to the detriment of the schools. So they lobbied it back out of the constitution; they had another referendum that took it out. I think at the same time this woman Myrtle Williams was taken



Wickenden: out of the constitution as head of welfare. Of course, it was a perfectly insane thing to put a particular individual's name into the constitution.

Fry: McLain also worked in Washington, did he?

Wickenden: He came to Washington a great deal. This is what I'm going to tell you about. I think it was the year 1950--Helen was running for the Senate--that this event occurred. At least it was all related to her campaign. McLain came along with a federal bill to create a federal old-age pension at seventy-five dollars a month for every individual. He had a petition to discharge the bill from the committee. Do you know about congressional petitions?

Fry: Yes, you petition an entire house, right?

Wickenden: Yes, to discharge a committee, I think you have to get two-thirds approval. Most members of the California delegation signed his petition. It was not very likely to pass. Helen was under great pressure to sign his petition and come out for his bill. He pressed her very hard, and her campaign people pressed her very hard to endorse his bill. So she asked me what to do. I of course understood her political problems, but I felt that she had been so supportive of social insurance under social security, and this bill would be totally incompatible with social security. You couldn't have the two systems. If it were to pass, it would destroy the social security system.

I worked out for them a substantive bill which he could not oppose. Her people in California were really dumbfounded that she could both vote to support the social security system and satisfy McLain. The way it was done was that she introduced a bill which provided a flat seventy-five dollar minimum social security payment. There always was a minimum social security payment, but her bill upped it to seventy-five dollars, plus an additional amount relating to prior contributions. This was so much better than the McLain bill itself that he was obliged to support her and her bill. It was one of those little political coups.

The people in the social security administration worked out the bill. I set up the specifications, and they worked out the bill and she introduced it. Of course, we worked on her statement at the time she introduced it. I think that was the most sharply pinpointed thing I ever did for her.

## A Case Study of Helen Douglas's Working Methods

Fry: Well then, can you describe to me how Helen worked on something? Maybe you can take this as an example, and give us a picture of her working methods.

Wickenden: Well--I think that all congressmen do this to some extent--they all have the help of either departments of the government or staff people or someone, because they can't possibly know all the technical ramifications of every issue that comes before the Congress. She had prior to this time developed the habit of calling on me when a social security issue was before the Congress. Except in this one case of McLain, which was really kind of a tricky operation of pure political maneuvers, I do not recall any other major initiative she took on a social security question. There was, of course, a continuous stream of social security and welfare bills and amendments coming along on which I undoubtedly advised her.

[begin tape 2, side B]

She probably called me on this whole problem of this pressure that she was under to endorse the McLain bill. I probably went to see her, and we talked it over. Either before or after that, I would have consulted with my own friends, those whom I worked with. We had a very close-knit group, in that period, of people who worked on social security: Wilbur J. Cohen later became the Secretary of HEW [Department of Health, Education, and Welfare]; Bob [Robert P.] Ball, who later became commissioner of social security; a man named Fedele [F.] Fauri [spells name], who was the Library of Congress adviser on social security. The chances are I would have talked this problem over with them, and arrived at this particular plan. I know I thought the plan up myself; then I had to get it translated into acceptable language. Social security legislation is always very complicated, big thick bills.

It's a perfectly respectable form of social security. They have it in Canada. It's called the "double decker," where you have a flat sum for everybody and then you build on top of that. I think hers was probably the first time, as far as I know, that there was this particular kind of proposal submitted to Congress.

Then I helped her--maybe drafted, for all I know--her statement on the bill that she put into the Congressional Record at the time she submitted it. In that, of course, we emphasized the problem of reconciling an adequate minimum level. Seventy-five dollars was considered a great deal of



Wickenden: money at that time. Now, of course, we're much higher in our whole social security system.

It is difficult to reconcile an adequate minimum with the strengths that lie in the contributory system. The primary strength is the way people feel when they have in fact contributed to the program. It's a system very much protected against political interference. Anybody in Congress who tried to take away social security benefits would be in trouble right away, because everybody is contributing to them.

Then she held a press conference, mainly of interest to Californians, but I think it was open to everybody. I had briefed her. I can't recall whether I was with her at the time she had the press conference or not. I've done this kind of thing many times with other members of Congress.

The real payoff was that it worked. Helen says to this day her campaign manager doesn't understand how it was possible for her to get away with it. That's the main thing, I guess, for her.

Fry: Here is a list of bills\*, which concern social security and other welfare matters.

Wickenden: I see that you have. I'm looking here. Is this quotation from her? Who's speech is this?

Fry: Let me see. I think this was Representative [John W.] McCormack's speech, which she quotes.

Wickenden: It doesn't sound familiar to me. I didn't know whether I might perhaps have contributed to it. The chances are I did.

There were many issues on which you could count on certain liberal members of Congress to support. I mean, they didn't have a formal bloc, so far as I know, except there would be alliances formed on specific issues. There is now a liberal coalition in the House, but I don't think that existed in Helen's time, at least in the same format as today.

Fry: I think there was one made up of maybe sixty congressmen in '44 and '46, led by a congressman from Santa Barbara.

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\* List of social legislation selected from voting record compiled for Douglas's campaign against Richard Nixon, 1950. See Appendix.



Wickenden: Phil [Phillip] Burton is now the head. His group has staff and meets together, but that's more recent. There may have been a precursor. It's become more important now. I think the only point I was really trying to make was that Helen was clearly one member of Congress that people in the administration or others interested in legislation would count on for support.

One of the things I remember, just because she had a flair for the dramatic, was when she took her food basket to the floor of the House to dramatize the need for continued price control on rents. She wanted to illustrate how prices on food had risen since food controls were lifted. She had a flair for that kind of thing.

Fry: I was going to ask you about any differences in persons you could rely on (like Helen) in the different Congresses, because you had the conservative Eightieth Congress, which was followed by a more liberal Congress.

Wickenden: I assume that it was the Eightieth one when the Gearhart Amendment passed. (Then later on, that was repealed. It was a temporary aberration.) I myself worked all the time with the Ways and Means Committee and the Senate Finance Committee. They're the two that deal with social security legislation. I had a continuing relationship there, but Helen was not on that committee--as you know, the people who really carry the ball are the committee members. I had my closest relationship with Congressman [Aime J.] Forand, and later on with others.

Fry: Did Helen ever help you in talking to or persuading a member of the committee?

Wickenden: I can't remember such an occasion. I don't know whether I would have possibly asked her to see if she could change Congressman Gearhart's mind, because he was from California. Of course, he was a Republican. I think it would have been futile, so I probably did not.

#### Helen Douglas's Political Image as Congresswoman

Fry: I wanted to ask you another question, from the viewpoint of our present-day concern with women's changing role in society. I wondered if there were any differences that you could detect between Helen, as a female congresswoman, as opposed to the male counterparts.

Wickenden: She immediately added an element of glamour, because she was a very handsome woman and very well dressed. The one rival she had in that respect was Mrs. Clare Boothe Luce. Of course, their viewpoints were diametrically opposed on most issues. I don't think that either of them liked to be compared to the other. There were a number of very strong women in Congress. Mrs. [Mary T.] Norton was one.

I think Helen, without being in any way self-conscious about it, did from time to time emphasize her female position on things as, for example, with this food basket. That was kind of a feminine thing to do. A man probably would not have done that.

Fry: A housewife's view.

Wickenden: Yes. She sometimes spoke that way too, I think. I would say that she was very unselfconscious about these things. She never asked special concessions of anyone. My recollection, though she would tell you more, was that she was a fairly close friend of Mrs. [Eleanor] Roosevelt in this whole period. Of course, when she went on the delegation to the United Nations, Mrs. Roosevelt would have been there. That might be something you might want to ask her, whether she had projects in association with Mrs. Roosevelt. I think they were both tremendously preoccupied with the question of peace.

Helen, of course, is really passionate on it. This is her great passion--this whole threat of nuclear armaments, and her great fear of them, her exasperation that people don't seem to recognize the danger that nuclear arms pose. One thing I like about Helen is that I think some women, when they get into a political or occupational role, feel that they should not let their emotions show, that they should restrain their emotions. That was never true of Helen. [Laughs] She saw no conflict--and I agree with her--between being a woman congressman and being--

Fry: An emotional being?

Wickenden: Yes. Any speech she made was always very impassioned. She's not a low-key speaker in any sense. She's a very good speaker in a room. I've had occasion to be with her. She's very self-assured, and knows how to get an audience's attention and hold it. I think her acting and singing and performing experience helped her there.

I think she may have had a little problem when she first came to Congress, in getting people to take her seriously.



Wickenden: She was, I think, the first of our acting congressmen. She never liked to be compared to anybody like Ronald Reagan or George L. Murphy, [laughs] or any of the others that have come out of Hollywood since then.

I think when she first came, she was the subject, obviously, of a great deal of interest. The newspapers paid attention to her and took her picture, because she was very photogenic.

Fry: Her ex-actress image overpowered her legislative image at first, is that what you're saying?

Wickenden: Only in the beginning. I think as time went on, she established with other congressmen, particularly with the members of the House Foreign Relations Committee, her seriousness and her ability to grasp and analyze and discuss a really quite complicated issue. I think every woman has that initial problem, to some extent, in Congress. I think with her coming as she did from Hollywood, this was a particular problem for her. Helen has no particular element of self-pity in her makeup at all, so she just took it in her stride and assumed they'd get over it in time, and they did.

#### Helen Douglas's Close Associates in Congress

Wickenden: I think when she first came to Congress, she was also helped by her associations with Lyndon [B.] Johnson. I worked very closely with Lyndon Johnson on matters relating to the N.Y.A. in the late thirties. That was before Helen was there. He was really quite well established in the Congress by the time she came. But they had a common interest in power and water issues. He helped her, just as he helped me enormously. I got to be considered a rather good lobbyist. Whatever I learned first about the legislative process, I really learned from him. I think he helped Helen get the hang of things to a very considerable degree.

Fry: Both in the legislative process and in the liberal issues?

Wickenden: No, I think Helen was always more a liberal than Lyndon Johnson. I don't think he helped her in that way. I think it was on how you maneuver things in the Congress. On some things they would have been together, like public power, but on the other issues I would say that she was much more liberal, particularly on things like the military. Lyndon Johnson was on the Military Affairs Committee--he was on the Naval Affairs Committee



Wickenden: in the House. He was always rather hawkish on armaments and military appropriations, that kind of thing. So Helen wouldn't have looked to him for guidance on the substance of certain issues. But they were always good friends. He respected her.

Fry: Do you know of other congressmen that she was especially close to whom I should ask her about?

Wickenden: No, I really don't. I would have thought that she probably was friendly with Mary Norton, because she was such a strong democratic woman. She's now dead, I'm sure. She was chairman of the Labor Committee. I would think that Helen might have taken some guidance from her on some things. She's the only one I think of, offhand.

I'm sure that there were people on that Foreign Affairs Committee that she looked to. But it was outside my orbit.

#### Goldschmidts and Douglasses: the Personal Side

##### A Thanksgiving Dinner

Fry: I'm eager to get at your social life with Helen, and talking more about Helen as a person in your own personal relationship with her. When she came to Washington, was that your first socializing with her?

Wickenden: The first time--I do often remember her being in our house, and our being in her house. Since I saw her at a period when she was very heavily involved in her work--and it is very demanding to be a member of Congress--I really didn't get to know her as well personally at that time as I did later when she moved to New York. We were both a little freer.

I remember thinking when she left Congress and no longer had Evie [Evelyn] Chavoor to run all the details of her occupational and personal life that she would have a very hard time. I remember the first thing that happened in New York was that she asked us plus a few very close friends to come to one of her family Thanksgiving dinners that she had. Since I had never known Helen in her domestic phase, I wondered how she would manage. We went there, and there must have been twenty, twenty-five, thirty people. She had cooked the whole thing herself, done the whole thing. I was most amazed,

Wickenden: because this was a side of her capacities that I had never known before! I realized then, as I have done many times since, that Helen is an extraordinarily capable person. She has vitality, has always had it. Well, with her various recent illnesses, she has lost some, but she really has a fantastic vitality. I had to change my estimate of her, to see her in a broader light.

Washington and New York: A Contrast in Helen Douglas's Style

Fry: She did grow up in a family where they had plenty of household help.

Wickenden: They had plenty of money.

Fry: I think she told me that until the World War II hit (and she was in Los Angeles and simply couldn't get help) she had never had to cope with household details.

Wickenden: That may very well be, but she knew how to do it, and she did it very well.

Fry: Evie helped her with these things too?

Wickenden: Yes. Evie really ran her house as well as her office, and did the things that needed to be done about the children's schooling, and hiring the help at home. It was partly for that reason that I had really no idea of Helen's own resources. I also, of course, got to know the children, particularly Mary, because she went to the same school as our children, and the same camp. I did know the children, and have followed them through their lives.

Fry: You continue to see them socially?

Wickenden: Oh, yes, we see them quite frequently. Helen and Mel have their social life in a rather tight circle of people. Not exclusively, but there's a core group, including the Myer Cohens. He has just retired from the U.N. She--Mrs. Elizabeth Cohen--comes originally from California. I think they knew her out there, but I'm not sure. Herman Shumlin, who's a producer. I know these people because they turn up at the Douglasses parties all the time.

Fry: Herman Shumlin?

Wickenden: S-h-u-m-l-i-n. A theater producer.

Fry: Was this true in Washington too? Or is it afterwards?

Wickenden: As I say, in Washington, my recollection is that Helen was too hard-pressed to do much entertaining. I know I may have gone once or twice to her house. I don't think she went out a great deal, either. I think it was just too much for her.

Fry: Also, Mel was away, in the army or in his career.

Wickenden: Yes, he was overseas most of the time that I knew her there. He was either overseas or he was in California. I think that they still had that house in California at that time.

Fry: They must have, because they didn't sell it until sometime after her 1950 defeat. I wonder if Mel's absence really made any difference, because my impression is that she's a fairly independent woman, and that Mel's presence or absence might not make too much difference in her social life.

Wickenden: Well, that's true. Of course, I think in the war period we were all under constraints. We lived differently in the war years. Helen and Mel were often apart, and they have always been the subject of recurrent rumors that they were breaking up and so forth. They always laughed about that, because I think they've had really a very solid relationship, despite the fact that they've been apart a good bit.

#### Helen Douglas: Post-1950 Activities

Wickenden: I wondered too, when we came to New York, how Helen would adapt to not having this kind of pressure on her from her work. I think sometimes when people get into that kind of a rat race, they find it very difficult to adjust. But she seemed to keep as busy as ever, partly with speaking. As I told you, she wound up her Senate campaign with a big debt, which she was determined to pay off herself. She took lecture engagements, many of them with the United Jewish Appeal, to raise money to pay off her debts. She felt it would be wrong to ask Mel to pay off her political debts, so she did whatever she could. I assume that she did eventually get them all paid off. It's something you might perhaps want to ask her about. It put a very great pressure on her.



## The Return to Singing and Acting

Wickenden: Then she decided [laughs]--typical of Helen!--to resume her singing career, though she was already fifty or so, a time when most singers are deciding to call it a day. She went back to her old teacher, and she even had a concert--a debut, as it were--at Carnegie. Not the big Carnegie Hall, but the small Carnegie Hall recital room, to which we all went. I thought she really was extremely good, but I think the critics' reactions were that it really was too much to ask that her voice should--that she should go on.

Then she had one part in a play at City Center. One of those plays about politics.

Fry: First Lady.

Wickenden: Yes. That was a limited engagement.

Fry: Did you get to see her in the play?

Wickenden: Yes.

Fry: What did you think of her acting?

Wickenden: I thought it was very good. I had no reservations at all. I thought her singing was good, too. Of course, to try to resume a career at that age in singing, where so much depends upon physical control, is so difficult.

Fry: And continuing high-pressure, intensive use of your voice. Was this the basis of the critics' concern, do you think?

Wickenden: I think it was. I only remember one criticism. I think that it was friendly in one way, that she had really done quite well, but probably not sufficient to warrant trying to resume her career.

## Why Not Politics?

Fry: Someone in Los Angeles was telling me that there was a feeling that Helen abdicated, in a way, after 1950. She could have been an important national leader for political liberals. She could have run for Congress again and gone to the House, but she didn't.

Wickenden: Well, of course, the first question there was where they were going to live. You'd have to ask someone else about this, but I had the impression that Mel wanted to attach himself more to the theater than to the movies. The place to live for that is in New York. Therefore, there was a decision made that they would remove themselves from California to New York. So that immediately threw out any question of running from California.

In New York, Helen has not, it's true, involved herself very greatly in New York politics--only in the most casual way. There never was any question raised about her running from New York that I know of. There were leadership roles in other ways. I don't think Helen is much of a joiner. I don't remember her being active in any organizations. She may or may not have been a member of the ADA [Americans for Democratic Action]. If she was a member, she never was an active member. My impression is that there are two ways to take a leadership role. One is to become active in an organization of one sort or another, the other is to write. Helen, I don't think, thinks of herself as a writer. I think she's having a lot of trouble with her book [an autobiography]. I mean, it's a painful process for her. She's way behind schedule.

She did speak a lot. She spoke on lecture tours.

Fry: Also, the other side of that is that a woman who was a national committeewoman told me that after 1950 she couldn't even have gotten an appointment as dogcatcher for Helen after Nixon got through with her. I don't know whether that's true or not. I wondered if the campaign had had such impact that Helen was viewed as being that ruined politically by other Democrats?

Wickenden: Well, I would not have thought so. She wouldn't have wanted an appointive office. I think she probably did wind up that campaign feeling rather jaded. But I think the big decision was to move to New York. That just automatically removed her from California politics. What she would have done if she stayed there--well, I have really no idea. I think part of that was wanting to be with Mel. She's never said so to me, but I would guess probably it was more a decision to concentrate on his career.

Fry: And family, maybe?

Wickenden: Yes.

## Supporting Disarmament

- Fry: You mentioned that she had a great passion for the cause of disarmament and so forth. What was the man's name--
- Wickenden: Philip Noel-Baker.
- Fry: Yes. He is British, was on the United Nations delegation, and is a Nobel Peace Prize winner. They were together in the U.N.
- Wickenden: I don't know what's happened to him more recently, but he was a member of Parliament. She did have some continuing association with him. I don't know exactly what the background of it was.
- I assume that when she made these disarmament lectures, she must have done so under somebody's auspices. She didn't do that for money. She did the UJA [United Jewish Appeal] ones for money. They found that she was a good drawing card, so they used her in their bond sales for Israel. Not that she wasn't very strong for Israel--she always has been. Their daughter, Mary, went to Israel. Our children went to Israel. Everybody sent their children to Israel.
- Fry: That's right, to work on the kibbutzim. [Laughter]
- Wickenden: She was always very interested in Israel, but I don't think it called out the passion that she feels about disarmament. She really has a consuming anger about the proliferation of nuclear arms. We had a mutual friend, James Newman, who worked on the nuclear bill, the original nuclear energy bill. The Senator's name on that bill was Brien McMahon. I think that Helen became very much interested in that nuclear energy bill.
- Fry: Yes, she did.
- Wickenden: That may have been the beginning of her preoccupation with the whole problem. But it goes on to this day. I mean, if Helen were sitting here now with us, she'd be off and running on the whole issue, because she feels so strongly.
- Fry: Her interest is very across-the-board, including the safety features of nuclear reactors and things like that.
- Wickenden: Unfortunately, James Newman, who I think had a great deal of influence on Helen, is now dead.



Helen Douglas and the Balancing Game: Career and Family

The Professional Woman Before the War and Now

- Fry: One thing that's interesting, in a parallel project that our office is conducting now on women and politics, is that the women who became active in the forties didn't have to cope with the full impact of the feminine mystique of the fifties as they were entering adult life. You and Helen fit into that classification. I wondered if there was any--
- Wickenden: I can speak only for myself, but I think it would be equally true of Helen. I came out of college in 1931. Helen is a little older than I. She went to Barnard, of course, as you know.
- Fry: In 1920.
- Wickenden: There's about five years difference in our ages. In my generation, we took female activity outside the home really very much for granted. I think many of the young girls coming along now don't realize how strong the commitment was to professions and so forth. In my class at college, I'm sure that well over half--more than that--seventy-five percent of my classmates have had some sort of a career. We didn't make quite as much fuss about it. I don't know if that's what you meant about the feminine mystique.
- Fry: Yes, that's what I was interested in.
- Wickenden: We just took it more or less for granted that that was what we were going to do, and we were capable of doing it. We expected men to deal with us on even terms. I'm sure Helen would say, as I would say, that each time you undertook to deal with a man--a new man--you had a period of establishing yourself as a serious person with authority in your own field. You start off with a handicap each time. But if you don't make too much fuss about it, and just go on doing your thing, eventually you'll be taken seriously.
- [end of tape 2, side B; begin tape 3, side A]
- I would not think that the problem of women in politics is very different from the problem of women in any other occupation, except that the political parties at that time--and still to some extent--were organized on a kind of Noah's ark basis. You had a state committeeman and a state committeewoman. You

Wickenden: had a state chairman, who was a man, and traditionally a state vice-chairman, who was a woman. Helen had been Democratic committeewoman in California, so she came out of the background of a kind of segregated approach to women in politics. I would say that it's always better in anything where you're in any sort of competitive position not to be self-conscious about it, but just to proceed on the assumption that you're going to be treated as an equal. I would say that was very much Helen's way. She would never be arch or self-conscious, self-defensive. She would simply proceed.

And besides that, she had such a power of concentration on the issues that she's concerned with, such a passionate preoccupation with the issues, that she would tend to lose her own consciousness of self in that preoccupation.

Fry: Where did you go to college?

Wickenden: Vassar.

Fry: You went to an Eastern institution and Helen went to an Eastern institution, Barnard. I don't know whether the women coming from Western institutions were any different, but they might have been.

Wickenden: Well, I think our education was not very different; she came from a very different sort of family than I did. I think Barnard and Vassar were alike in many ways. I don't know what she would say about it, but Dean Virginia C. Gildersleeve, was the head of Barnard for many years--I think she was a feminist leader in her time and probably the students took on a certain amount of that from her.

But I think you're right; there is a kind of self-consciousness about women's liberation, as it's called today. We would never have dreamed of going through this process of so-called "consciousness raising." We would have thought that was a terrible waste of time, when we could be getting on with being a lawyer, doctor, politician, or whatever we chose to be. It would interfere with our career-mindedness.

Fry: Were the men in this period equally aware, or equally agreeable, to "flexibility of roles," as we would say today?

Wickenden: I think not so much as today, for the simple reason that they didn't have to be.

Fry: You were perfectly willing to be the housewife and the cook?

Wickenden: It was much easier for us in those days, because we could hire servants and nurses. That made an enormous difference. A woman had to have managerial responsibilities, but not anywhere the amount of sheer physical work. For instance, when I was in Washington, a large number of my women friends had children and were working, but usually when the children were small they had a nurse. The nurse was very much of a going thing in those days. In my case, I had a nurse and a maid and a laundress. There was, of course, a managerial problem.

When I speak of my own generation, and this would be Helen's too, all these women had husbands, and the husbands obviously cooperated. I mean, the husbands weren't interfering with them. In fact, I don't think anybody ever assumed that they would. But I don't think there was the same emphasis on the sharing of child care and so forth. It was more spontaneous. The father would spend what time with his children that he could.

I find this present generation a little more self-conscious about it altogether. I should say this, that between my period in the thirties and today, there was the big gap in the war. The people who were coming into their adult life at the end of the war felt a terrific rush to have babies very young.

Fry: There was a backlash for domesticity.

Wickenden: That period did not see the same degree of professionalism among women that occurred in my time and that's now occurring again. I'm personally enormously impressed with this generation of young women. There are a lot of them working in Washington now that I think are just terrific. What I say about my generation is not in any way to downgrade this generation. I think probably the people like Betty Friedan and others led the way for a group of young women that take it much more casually.

Fry: I think so.

Wickenden: They've opened up some doors, and the girls are walking through them. That was true of me, too. There had been the suffragists and that whole generation that had opened the way for my much more matter-of-fact generation.



## Helen and Melvyn: Two Careers

- Fry: The only other question I would have about Helen in this respect then, would be if she and Melvyn had the problem that some of the young married women in the sixties did have, as women's lib began, of dealing with the feeling of competition between husband and wife, especially since she and Mel had been in the same field.
- Wickenden: Well, I've never seen any evidence of that with Helen and Mel at all. Partly, I think, because Helen is a very self-assured person generally. But I think it's always a matter of individual personalities.
- Fry: Was Mel able to take her glories and triumphs in Washington in stride? Do you know?
- Wickenden: I don't really know, but I assume so. In the first place, he had his own things that he was doing. I think that's been characteristic of them all along. I think Helen has more vitality in her later years than Mel has. Helen is enormously vigorous; she really is fantastic. Of course, I am, as you can see, a very great admirer of Helen's, and feel great affection for her. But mainly I admire her so much. She's totally lacking in self-pity.

## Handling Richard Nixon

- Wickenden: For example, when Nixon began to come back onto the national scene, everybody--newspapermen, everybody--wanted to revive the whole story of his behavior in the campaign against Helen. But Helen would not lend herself to it. She wouldn't talk about it at all. Later on, she became so disgusted with Nixon and Watergate that she did talk a little bit more. But up to that time, she would never talk about it. If people wanted to get her to talk, she'd say, "Well, that's just politics for you." Where other people were very indignant in her behalf at his treatment of her, she herself--well, she'd laugh about it, but she wouldn't make a big issue out of it. She's always very realistic. She laughs about her battle with Nixon and says, "You know, the ridiculous thing is that he didn't have to do those things. He was going to win anyway. Everybody knew that I would lose on the Korean War, which was then very unpopular. Any Democrat was tainted by that." She said, "He didn't defeat me by these tactics. He didn't need to do that." Then she'd

Wickenden: laugh about it.

I imagine--though I didn't see her in that period--that she probably just went about her campaigning, taking such advice as she could accept, and probably didn't pay too much attention to what Nixon was saying.

Fry: She was very much emphasizing the issues--the problem of land ownership, the 160-acre limitation, and things like that in California.

Wickenden: One of the ways he tried to pin a red label on her was comparing her voting record to Vito Marcantonio. Any liberal would have been in the same situation: Marcantonio voted right!

Fry: Yes, with the Democrats. [Laughter]

Wickenden: On most things. That was a very demagogic thing to do. I don't know that she even bothered to answer that. I would strongly guess that she probably paid a minimum of attention to it.

Fry: Not much, as near as I can tell. You know, it's very hard to document a campaign because so much of it is--

Wickenden: --ephemeral.

Fry: Yes. The newspapers of the period really didn't pick up Helen very much. They gave most of their coverage to Nixon in California.

Wickenden: Really?

Fry: It's hard to find out what she really was saying.

Wickenden: Is her campaign manager still alive, or the people who worked on it?

Fry: Some of the people who worked on the campaign are still alive. That's the best way we can get it, from their testimony.

Wickenden: Of course, we were in the East, so we didn't have much contact with it.

Fry: Is there anything else that might give us--?

Wickenden: One thing that my husband may have told you: We went to visit them in their Vermont house on Lake Fairlee at the time that [John] Dean was testifying at the Watergate hearings. Well,

- Wickenden: it poured rain all the time, so we just sat on the television, which is exceptional for them. They're not big television watchers. But on that hearing, we spent two or three days doing nothing but listening to the hearings. She was very fascinated by that whole Watergate story.
- Fry: Was Mel giving you his running commentaries, as Dean testified?  
[Laughter]
- Wickenden: We all put in our two cents' worth. We really enjoyed that very much. I say that Helen was not personally self-conscious about Nixon, but politically as a Democrat she was very violent about Nixon, as soon as it got removed from her immediate person.
- Fry: As when he ran for president again?
- Wickenden: Yes.
- Fry: But she still didn't come out with any warning statements about, "Look, you don't understand what this man was like in California." This is what some people wished—
- Wickenden: No, that she wouldn't do. She would not do it. She really had quite a stubborn resistance to that kind of pressure. As I say, it really wasn't until the time of Watergate that she was willing to have her own history exploited in any way, shape, or form. She wouldn't do it. She'd just clam up. She wouldn't talk to reporters or anybody about it.
- One thing she did say to me about that. "You really do yourself no good with that kind of talk, because it is immediately identified as sour grapes, a poor loser," she said. "I think it's an undignified situation." She had her own very strong convictions about that.
- I think she felt she had kind of shot her political bow. Maybe the time had passed, and she was moving into some other period of her life. She never said that to me directly, but I have that feeling about it. When she moved here to New York, the campaign was over. She'd had several careers already! She'd had an operatic career and a stage career and a very active role in politics in California as state committeewoman. I don't think it seemed like anything new and strange to her...
- Fry: To drop it, or at least to de-emphasize it, and go on to something else.



## As a Mother

- Fry: Could you talk about Helen as a mother? I've often wondered how she got through her kids' adolescence.
- Wickenden: Of course, she had problems with her children in their growing-up years as all mothers do. Mary has had more than her share of difficulties because of her size and her strong dependence on her family even in her adult years. On the other hand, she has a beautiful nature and is very supportive to Helen, especially in her present illness. I believe Peter had some special problems in his adolescence but this has undoubtedly contributed to the success of his present professional work as a therapist, especially with young people. I did not see as much of Peter when he was growing up as I did of Mary Helen because he went to boarding school and was not home as much. Gregory, Mel's son by an earlier marriage, has also had a difficult time finding himself with respect to his identity, occupation and marriage. Hollywood and Washington were undoubtedly difficult places to grow up in, but I always found Helen and Mel to be understanding and supportive parents. As I say, in those days, we just took it for granted that Evie Chavoor really ran the house.
- Fry: Did Helen have any other servants?
- Wickenden: Oh yes, I'm sure she did.
- Fry: But Evie was the manager?
- Wickenden: Oh yes. In those days, it wasn't all that difficult. I'm sure she had some sort of a maid. It was difficult in the war years, and there may have been difficulties surrounding it, but there were house workers somewhere. Mary is very crazy about her mother and imitates her in many ways. I'm always being reminded in her speech, and her gestures. Have you ever talked with Mary?
- Fry: Yes, I noticed that too. Their similarities in speech are very striking.
- [end tape 3, side A; begin tape 3, side B]

## A Very Special Person

- Fry: I wanted to ask you about when Helen's sister Lily died. That seems to be a very crucial event in her life; I think she was fairly inactive for a couple of years afterward.
- Wickenden: That may be. She was very distressed, I know. She went to stay with her sister in Palm Beach, and she tried to help her. Her sister was divorced and had no one, really, to support her psychologically. She had cancer of the liver. After she died I went to see Helen, and she talked a little about her sister. As I told you before we turned on the tape, when I had a death in my family, she came to stay with me. To me, she's very supportive. I feel much better when I'm with Helen.
- Fry: Your husband told me about how she came and helped when your daughter was killed. She seems to have a sense of when people need her.
- Wickenden: I think she's a very beautiful woman, even now. The planes of her face are very good. It was Heywood [H.] Broun who once said that she was the ten most beautiful women in America! [laughs] Of course in her youth she was extraordinarily beautiful. I think she's still a very handsome woman, with great strength of personality. She dominates any situation, not because she pushes herself forward, it's just some inherent quality she has that draws people's attention to her.
- Fry: It's kind of a sense of energy.
- Wickenden: Yes. She has enormous vitality. I think that even when she had her mastectomy, she was very open about that with everybody. Even when she was trying to recover her full strength and the use of her arm and so forth, she was as energetic about that kind of effort as she would be about getting a bill through Congress. She just pours her vitality into whatever her immediate problem is.
- I do think, however, she's had a good deal of difficulty with her book. She's certainly way behind schedule. I sympathize with her on that because I think writing is very hard.
- Fry: She's doing a lot of revision on the book, I think.
- Wickenden: Well, she isn't very strong now either. She's just out of the hospital, again. I went to see her there. She's very self-assured and frank. She won't accept any kind of pity. That's the last thing.

Fry: She's very matter-of-fact.

Wickenden: Yes, she is.

Fry: It's "simply a cancer of the pleura," and she's sure that she'll lick it.

Wickenden: Very optimistic, although I think she's also realistic. I think she keeps that optimistic sense partly for Mel's benefit. But I think that's really just the way she is. She could be simultaneously living on the basis of an optimistic outlook, and still recognizing that there are certain risks involved. She knows that very well. She doesn't talk about it, but I'm sure she does. That's typical of her. I think I'm exhausted by...

Fry: Your essay on Helen? [Laughs]

Wickenden: Not my energies, but the things that I can contribute, unless you have particular questions.

Fry: I think I've exhausted my questions, too. I really appreciate this.

Transcriber: Leslie Goodman-Malamuth  
Final Typist: Ann Enkoji



April, 1974

ELIZABETH WICKENDEN

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Professor of Urban Studies (on leave)  
 Office of Urban Policy and Programs of  
 the Graduate School and University Center  
 The City University of New York

Consultant to  
 The National Assembly of National Voluntary  
 Health and Social Welfare Organizations, Inc.  
  
 The Children's Defense Fund  
 Juvenile Justice Division

### Personal History

#### Current

Activities Professional consultation, writing, teaching, and other services related to social policy formulation and interpretation, social legislation, social action activity, and urban research.

Technical Consultant on Public Social Policy to The National Assembly of National Voluntary Health and Social Welfare Organizations, Inc.

Consultant on Welfare to Juvenile Justice Division of Children's Defense Fund

Member, Citizens Committee for Children of New York  
 Advisory Committee, Retirement Advisors, Inc.  
 National Conference on Public Service Employment, Board of Directors  
 National Association of Social Workers

#### Former

Activities National Advisory Committee to the Legal Services Program of OEO  
 Chancellor's Advisory Committee on The Status of Women at The City University of New York  
 Social Policy Consultant to the National Board, YWCA  
 Consultant to Project on Social Welfare Law, Hays Center, New York University Law School  
 Research Associate, Research Center, Florence Heller Graduate School for Advanced Studies in Social Welfare, Brandeis University  
 Member, National Citizens Advisory Council on the Status of Women  
 Member, Advisory Council on Public Welfare

Former  
Activities  
 continued

Consultant (under contract) to the Welfare Administration  
 Consultant (under special service contract) to Bureau of Social  
 Affairs United Nations  
 Consultant to the Yale Law School  
 Leader of Institute on Social Action, New York School of Social Work  
 June 1962 and June 1963  
 Director, Project on Public Services for Families and Children,  
 New York School of Social Work (1960-61)  
 Member, Kennedy Task Force on Health and Social Security Legislation  
 (1960-61)  
 Member, Advisory Committee on AFDC Eligibility Review  
 Former Vice President, Citizens Crusade Against Poverty

History

1931. . . . . graduated from Vassar College  
 1931-32 . . . . . traveling and studying abroad  
 1932-33 . . . . . Emergency Exchange Association (NYC)  
 1933-35 . . . . . Assistant Director and Acting Director,  
 Transient Division, Federal Emergency  
 Relief Administration  
 1935-38 . . . . . Assistant Deputy Administrator, Work  
 Projects Administration  
 1939-40 . . . . . Assistant to Administrator, National  
 Youth Administration  
 1940-41 . . . . . Special Assistant, Office of Defense  
 Health and Welfare Services  
 1941-51 . . . . . Washington Representative, American Public  
 Welfare Association  
 1951-59 Consultant to:  
 National Association of Social Workers . . on public social  
 policy  
 Family Service Association of America on its social action  
 program  
 Division of Public Assistance, Puerto Rico . . on role of  
 public welfare in economic development  
 American Public Health Association . . on medical care for  
 needy in New York City  
 United Community Defense Services . . on problems of com -  
 munity development and social change related to defense  
 National Urban League . . on role of social welfare in race  
 relations  
 National Committee on Social Work in the Defense Mobilization  
 . . on social welfare in the military establishment  
 National Travelers Aid Association . . on welfare problems  
 related to migration and restrictive residence laws  
 New York State Temporary Commission on Youth and Delinquency  
 . . on problems of juvenile delinquency  
 Minister of the Court, Iran (1957-58) on welfare development  
 Citizens Committee for Children in New York City . . on New  
 York State welfare legislation

Elizabeth Wickenden - Personal History Page 3

Partial List of Publications

Sharing Prosperity: Income Policy Coupons in an Affluent Society, chapter in Towards Freedom from Want, Industrial Relations Research Association Series, Madison, Wisconsin. 1968 (Reprint)

Social Welfare Law: The Concept of Right and Entitlement, University of Detroit Law Journal (Vol. 45:517) (Reprint)

Social Welfare in a Community, Welfare Administration, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Washington, D.C. 1965

Welfare Services, chapter in In Aid of the Unemployed. Edited by Joseph M. Becker, S.J., The Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore, Maryland. 1965

Public Welfare: Time for a Change (with Winifred Bell), Report of the Project on Public Services for Families and Children, N.Y. School of Social Work. 1961

Social Action, article in 1965 Social Work Yearbook

Social Action, article in 1960 Social Work Yearbook

Frontiers in Voluntary Welfare Services, chapter in The Nations Children, Vol. III, published for 1960 White House Conference on Children and Youth

Social Security and Voluntary Social Welfare in Cornell Industrial and Labor Review, October 1960

Goals of Public Social Policy (edited) National Association of Social Workers

Youth and Delinquency (edited) N.Y. Temporary Commission on Youth and Delinquency

The Social Cost of Residence Laws, National Travelers Aid Association

The Situation in Public Welfare (out of print)

The Military Program and Social Welfare published by National Committee on Social Work in the Defense of Mobilization

People and National Defense published by United Community Defense Services

How to Influence Public Policy published by American Association of Social Workers

The Needs of Older People published by American Public Welfare Association

Articles in Public Welfare, Survey, Social Casework, Social Work Journal, Public Administration Review, Municipal Yearbook, Encyclopedia Americana, past issues of Social Work Yearbook, etc.

Awards: from National Conference of Social Work - 1955  
 District #65 of the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union  
 AFL-CIO  
 Michael Schwerner Memorial Fund - 1967  
 American Public Welfare Association, the W.S. Terry Memorial  
 Award - 1967

Personal: Husband, Arthur Goldschmidt, Consultant on Development Programs to United Nations and others

Children: Arthur, Jr., Mrs. Raymond Richardson, Mrs. J.M. Kempton, Jr.  
 (deceased)



Cut Social Security

- 1) The Republican resolution taking 750 thousand workers out from under the provisions of the Social Security Law. These workers had already contributed to the insurance program. (1948)
- Against For

H.J. Res. 296; 80th C, 2nd S; 2/27/48; p. 1908

Joint Resolution agreed to 275-52.

President vetoed this resolution.

- 2) Vote to override Presidential vote of the above Resolution (1948)
- Against For

Veto over-ridden 298 - 75; 6/14/48; p. 8191

- 1/ Representative McCormack of Massachusetts, majority leader of the House of Representatives presented the factual argument for the Democratic Party in a recent speech on the floor of the House in an effort to explain the basis of the Social Security extension bill--

"Let us come down to other questions. They talk about socialism. Why, the great majority of my Republican friends--not all of them--confuse dynamic democracy with socialism. They oppose, as I said, social security, they oppose the minimum wage law, they oppose public housing, they have opposed everything during the last 16 or 18 years; but one thing is certain, and that is as long as they maintain that kind of leadership we Democrats need never fear about election.

"The American people want progressive government, the American people are thinking for themselves. There are one-hundred-and fifty-odd million Americans and they are thinking for themselves. They have their hopes. they have their aspirations. For example, 45 percent of the families of America have a family income of \$3,000 a year or less in this land of bounty.

"There are 16,600,000 Americans that go home every night to their homes. I do not know where it is, but it is their home, the same as my home is mine, the same as the home of a millionaire is his. They go to their homes tonight with all their joys and with all their sorrows, their sickness and everything else. They leave in the morning, the mother and the wife usually left behind, as in our homes. There are 16,600,000 Americans in families with a total family income of \$1,000 a year or less. There are 20,600,000 Americans, members of families whose total income is between \$1,000 and \$2,000. Yes; some people can smile at that, but when there is serious illness they want their loved ones to have the best care possible; they want the best medical treatment. They are human beings just the same as you and I. And, they are thinking. Do not think they are not. You can make all the arguments you want here that come to your mind to try to inflame, but they are thinking of their loved ones. There are 28,700,000 Americans today, family people, that have a total family income of between \$2,000 and \$3,000.....If that is not a challenge to constructive statesmanship, I do not know what is."

Extend Social Security 2/

This Bill designed to extend Social Security coverage to 11,000,000 additional workers - (1949)

- |    |   |                 |         |
|----|---|-----------------|---------|
| 1) | Motion to consider comprehensive Democratic Social Security Bill. This motion permitted <u>prompt</u> action and prevented only filibustering type debate | For<br>(Paired) | Against |
|----|---|-----------------|---------|

HR-6000; 81st C, 1st S; 10/5/49; p. 14018  
Passed 175 - 154

- |    |  |         |     |
|----|--|---------|-----|
| 2) | Motion to kill comprehensive Social Security Bill by recommitting it to Committee. | Against | For |
|----|--|---------|-----|

HR-6000; 81st C, 1st S; 10/5/49; p. 14240  
Motion rejected 113 - 232

- |    |  |     |     |
|----|--|-----|-----|
| 3) | Passage of the final Extended Social Security Bill | For | For |
|----|--|-----|-----|

HR-6000; 81st C, 1st S; 10/5/49; p. 14241  
Bill passed 333 - 14

Note: Motion awaiting Senate action but 3/  
being held up by Senator Knowland.

- 2/ Nixon consistently voted to recommit and not consider this bill extending Social Security. Mrs. Douglas voted against these attempts to delay and defeat the Bill. In the end, when the Republicans were unable to defeat the Bill and passage was inevitable, Nixon belatedly joined the Bandwagon and voted for passage.

- 3/ Mrs. Douglas explained what is delaying this bill in the Senate as of this date in her remarks in the Congressional Record on August 9, 1950. She said:

"Mr. Speaker, the pending social security bill has been held up for several weeks by an amendment offered in the other body on unemployment insurance. Many Members of the House do not know that the Knowland amendment to break down the unemployment insurance system which was adopted on the floor of the other body was opposed by the Senate Finance Committee. This amendment has nothing to do with old-age pensions at all. The Knowland amendment deals with unemployment insurance administered by the Secretary of Labor. It is a bad amendment.

"But even more important than the fact that it is a bad amendment is that it is holding up final passage of the social security bill. Millions of American people are anxiously waiting for the passage of the social security bill so that they can get the increased benefits which Congress has voted. But the adoption of this irrelevant amendment by the other body has jeopardized the possibility of millions of aged persons, widows, and dependent children getting their increased benefits promptly. The Knowland amendment jeopardizes the welfare of the aged. It jeopardizes the welfare of widows and dependent children. I am opposed to it."



Social legislation: <sup>notes</sup> (Summary)

Federal aid in slum clearance, 1949. HR-4009; 81st C, 1st S, 6-29-49. Bill passed 228-185. (Nixon opposed)

Middle income housing, govt. assistance for m.i. groups: 81st Cong., 2nd s; 3/22/50. Passed

Minimum wage - extended to new groups. 8-8-49; passed. Amendment took 1,000,000 out from under its protection passed 8/10/49, with amendment.

1947--Extension of program to import cutrate foreign farm labor--HGD against.

Substitute for Taft-Hartley that would still continue use of injunctions, forbid closed shop, union shop, etc., passed 5/3/49, with HGD voting against.

But a motion to kill this by recommitting it to the committee passed, with HGD's support, next day.

Tidelands: Bill to cede tidelands to states, passed 4/31/48, 257-29 with HGD against (paired). (June 23, 1947, the Supreme Court decided marginal sea lands belong to USA) *This has same interests behind it as anti migratory workers' aid*

Social Security: Joint resolution by Republicans taking 750,000 persons out from under social security. Workers had already contributed to soc sec program. Passed 275-52, 2/27/48. vetoed by Truman. Overriden 6/14/48 298-75. (HGD against both) see xerox of page, with long footnote, taken from blue book. McCormack's speech.

1949: bill to extend Social Security coverage to 11 mil more: Motion to consider comprehensive Demo Social Security Bill, with filibustering prevented(?), passed 175-154 10/5/49; HR6000.

Motion to kill comprehensive soci sec bill by recommitting it to ctee 10/5/49. Motion rejected 113-232.

Passage of final extended social security bill (HR6000) 333-14 (!) 10/5/49. Motion awaiting senate action at time of HGD's campaign for senate, but being held up by Bill Knowland in senate, an amendment on unemployment insurance.



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HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS PROJECT

Mary Dublin Keyserling

THE FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS AND HELEN FULLER

An Interview Conducted by  
Fern Ingersoll  
in 1977

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MARY DUBLIN KEYSERLING





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## INTERVIEW HISTORY

In a very busy life Mary Dublin Keyserling made time to talk about a friendship group that was extremely meaningful to Helen Gahagan Douglas. Because of the particularly close relationship of Helen Douglas to Helen Fuller, who worked with the New Republic as assistant editor (1944-1951) during the years Helen Douglas was in Congress, only later becoming managing editor, our conversation centered on the friendship of these two women. A summary of Mrs. Keyserling's own career is appended to this transcript.

Since the day of our interview, January 5, 1977, was an unusually snowy one for Washington, Mrs. Keyserling's secretary had left at noon, making it necessary for her to answer her own phone many times in response to callers drawing upon her knowledge as an economist and administrator with long experience on the Washington scene.

We met at her home in northwest Washington, D.C. As we sat in her gracious living room--one wall lined with books and another with glass giving a wide view of Rock Creek Park--she willingly plunged into the outlined questions I had prepared, almost before I asked them.

When I received the approved transcript from her, the hand of the professional writer was evident, not changing her original thought, but clarifying and adding to it.

Fern S. Ingersoll  
Interviewer-Editor

Takoma Park, Maryland  
26 May 1978



V THE FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS AND HELEN FULLER

[Interview 1: January 5, 1977]  
[begin tape 1, side A]

Two Helens Speak

- Ingersoll: There's so much in Who's Who [Who's Who in America 1976-7, p.1707] about things you had done before and have done since the time of your friendship with Helen Gahagan Douglas, and Helen Fuller, that I think, if you agree, I'll just put the information as it is in Who's Who to give a notion of the sort of things you had done at the time you met Helen Gahagan Douglas.
- Keyserling: Perhaps I might give you a one-page summary of my activities, which would be a little clearer and easier to understand.\*
- Ingersoll: That would be just fine. Now then, perhaps we could start to talk about that friendship, and then go on to some of your own feelings and thoughts about Helen Gahagan Douglas as you have known her through the years. When did you first meet Helen Fuller?
- Keyserling: I worked off and on in Washington from '38 to '40 from my office as the executive director of the National Consumers League which was located in New York. I came down to Washington quite frequently because I headed up the national citizens' campaign for the Fair Labor Standards Act. I can't recall ever meeting Helen Fuller in those years. I was concentrating on labor standards and this was not a field in which Helen was actively working.

My husband and I were married in the fall of 1940. I moved

---

\* Appended to interview, page 134.



Keyserling: to Washington then, and, beginning early in 1941, had a job up on the Hill, running hearings for a House committee. I can remember in the course of that work meeting Helen Fuller. Then I worked, starting early in '42, on Mrs. Roosevelt's staff, when she was the head of the Civilian Branch of the Office of Civilian Defense and I encountered Helen Fuller occasionally in that connection. Do you recall offhand when Helen Fuller went to the New Republic?

Ingersoll: Yes, I have that information. It was 1941 that she started to work for the New Republic.

Keyserling: Prior to 1941 Helen had been on the National Youth Administration staff. Both my husband and I knew Michael Straight, who was then the publisher of the New Republic. We saw Helen from time to time at social gatherings all through the forties, and she came quite often to our house for dinner, with other people. At that time Helen had an apartment here in Washington--she didn't have the country place, which she had later on. We used to drop in for occasional afternoon visits at Helen's. We were good friends. I admired her greatly. She was a very effective writer, she was an extremely thoughtful person. She was concerned with many of the same issues that we'd been actively concerned with in all of our working lives--both my husband and myself. Not all of them--her interests were not so much economic as they were political and human need, in orientation. Economic issues were not, for her, a primary concern.

Ingersoll: Which, of course, was your specialty.

Keyserling: Yes.

Ingersoll: But then as you got more deeply into consumer affairs, which you had been interested in before that, and then in the forties in international trade, those were probably more her lines of things.

Keyserling: She was concerned with consumer issues but not involved in the field of international trade. But my primary interest has always been in the economics of human welfare, and that was, of course, a major concern of Helen's. The needs of young people, and other social and welfare problems, and what the administration and Congress were seeking to do to improve the human situation. I can't put my finger specifically on occasions as early as that when Helen Gahagan Douglas might have been involved. It seems to me that the first time I encountered Helen Gahagan Douglas was when she came to Congress.

Ingersoll: That would have been about 1945. [Tape turned off as telephone rings]

- Keyserling: I was saying I remember meeting Helen Douglas quite early after she came to Congress. I was the chairman of a legislative conference held here in Washington, as I recollect sometime around '46, convened by the National Federation of Settlements and Neighborhood Centers on the board of which I served. There are, as you know, several hundred settlement houses around the country. Hull House was the early pioneer in Chicago, and the great Henry Street Settlement in New York City was another outstanding leader. This was a movement that Helen Douglas was very much interested in. I asked Helen Douglas to be one of the main speakers at that conference. And she did, I might say, an absolutely magnificent job. I think I have my records of the meeting in my files if you want more details on that, but it was a rather minor event in Helen's life. She was giving speeches all over the country, and she was simply superb.
- Ingersoll: I would like to have it to add to this if it's possible.
- Keyserling: I will try to find the records, and I hope a copy of or notes on Helen Douglas's talk. And I also asked Helen Fuller to lead one of the sessions on how bills are introduced and legislation passed. Helen Fuller, too, was just absolutely superb with this group. The group represented low-income neighbors from the center cities, staff members and board members--quite a range--and, as I recollect, there must have been four or five hundred people at this conference.
- Ingersoll: And a rather difficult group to speak to because of their diversity and backgrounds.
- Keyserling: That's right. And both Helens had a unique skill, so impressive that I can remember it in detail thirty-one years later. Without talking down to the more sophisticated, they were able to make things simple and direct, and clear. I can remember the immensely warm reception that both of them got.
- Ingersoll: Do you know how and when Helen Fuller and Helen Douglas met?
- Keyserling: I can't tell you.
- Ingersoll: You don't think this was the occasion on which they met?
- Keyserling: Oh, no. I'm sure they had met earlier, but I can't answer that question.
- Ingersoll: How frequently were you all together?
- Keyserling: We were together at this meeting, at other meetings, but primarily at social occasions. At our house here in Washington, at the



- Keyserling: homes of other friends, and at Helen Fuller's--not at Helen Douglas's because I don't think she at this stage, did any considerable amount of entertaining. She was commuting a good deal.
- Ingersoll: And getting to know Washington life.
- Keyserling: That's right, and also being an extraordinarily conscientious, hardworking congresswoman.
- Ingersoll: She always was as I understand from the people I've talked to.
- Keyserling: She was a graduate of Barnard College, which I also graduated from. I wasn't an active participant in alumni affairs, and I don't believe Helen Douglas was, so we didn't encounter each other in that connection. But I had known of her, because, if you remember, when she graduated from Barnard she went into the theater and became prominent, and very well known as an actress, and a person I knew about, and respected. I admired the kinds of things she was doing in the theater.

Conversation and Companionship at Helen Fuller's Country Home

- Ingersoll: Were there times later on when Helen Fuller invited Helen Douglas and you and your husband down to her Virginia home?
- Keyserling: Oh, many, many times. There were more times than I think I can recount when we met together there.
- Ingersoll: What kinds of occasions were those? Were there occasions when there was good talk, and that sort of thing?
- Keyserling: Yes, certainly. But they usually were rather large gatherings, of Helen Fuller's friends. There was a tremendous lamb roast on one occasion, or perhaps it was a pork roast, or maybe it was both, but I remember some of the local men made deep pits and roasted the meat over the pits, and there would be forty or fifty guests, almost all of whom knew each other. Helen Douglas often came down. Mel wasn't able to come, except on rare occasions.
- Ingersoll: He was away, you know, during many of those years.
- Keyserling: That's right. I can think of one or two occasions when he was there, but Helen Douglas often came for these events because they were really big and happy reunions, in the summer or spring.



- Keyserling: It was a chance for all of us to be together. The social events in our lives are not the usual events merely socializing. They are occasions to talk about what's going on in the world, and what ought to be going on, and to exchange ideas.
- Ingersoll: Just after I turned the tape recorder off when you went away, we were saying that these were occasions when there were large groups of people together. People who were thinking about things, doing things, and I said, "A time when they could get together and compare notes." And just after the tape recorder went off, you said, "Much more than comparing notes." Could you tell me a little more about the kind of conversations that went on at those gatherings?
- Keyserling: It was always involved in the politics of the moment. Who was supporting what, what needed to be done, who could be pushed to do what. Of course, it depended whether we were in Democratic or were in Republican years. But the focus was always on the "big" issues.
- Ingersoll: You told me about one lamb roast, or pork roast. Can you describe any other occasions for me like that? Can you bring any to mind?
- Keyserling: Well, there were many of these barbecue feasts over the years, and I can remember Helen Douglas being there many times over the years.
- Ingersoll: Were there sometimes smaller occasions, too?
- Keyserling: There were many times when my husband and I would drive down to see Helen Fuller on a Sunday afternoon. After she left the New Republic and gave up her apartment in Washington in the sixties, she lived there almost full time, and we tried to keep in touch with her and Helen kept in touch with us. And occasionally Helen Douglas would be down there for a weekend. And there'd be a small group of friends.
- Ingersoll: This was in the years even after Helen Gahagan Douglas's political work was over.
- Keyserling: Yes.
- Ingersoll: And the friendship continued.
- Keyserling: Helen Fuller didn't have her house in Virginia as I recall until some time in the fifties, and by then Helen Douglas had left Washington.

- Ingersoll: I see. So the meetings with Helen Douglas and Helen Fuller when you were all together would have been on the Washington scene during the time when Helen was in Congress.
- Keyserling: When Helen was in Congress. And then after Helen Douglas had left Congress she would come down [to Virginia] for special occasions. And it may have been that when Helen Douglas was visiting, Helen Fuller made this an occasion for a party.
- Ingersoll: As you look back to those times when Helen Douglas was in Congress, and Helen Fuller had her to her Washington apartment, did she sometimes come to visit you in your apartment, too.
- Keyserling: In our house. Helen Douglas?
- Ingersoll: Yes.
- Keyserling: Yes, occasionally. And there was one occasion--a dinner, only one I think--when both Mel and Helen Douglas had dinner with us. Melvyn Douglas did do some work back in '42 and '43 in connection with Mrs. Roosevelt's heading up of the civilian activities of the Office of Civilian Defense, and that brought us together. Mrs. Roosevelt's staff was not concerned with the preparedness of civilians against possible physical dangers, but was concerned with helping to see that the human needs that were growing out of the war were met. In the early years of the war, Mrs. Roosevelt started a movement to get congressional support for day care for the children of mothers who'd gone into the factories. The passage of the Lanham Act resulted which provided day care services for millions of children with working mothers, during World War II years. Mel joined Mrs. Roosevelt's staff in an informal, in and out way; he wasn't there from eight to six, six days a week as the rest of us were, but I got to know him quite well then. I can remember his coming to dinner on several occasions, without Helen Douglas, because she wasn't here in Washington at that time.
- Ingersoll: That's right. And you at that time were also working for this Office of Civilian Defense?
- Keyserling: Yes, I was director of the research and analysis and statistics division which analyzed problems needing attention and reported them for action to Mrs. Roosevelt.
- Ingersoll: So you had known him perhaps even before Helen Douglas.
- Keyserling: Yes. I had forgotten that when we first talked, but it's thirty years ago we were colleagues, and then for only a brief time.



Ingersoll: It's interesting the way one string of memories pulls out others as we go along.

A Relationship of Respect and Affection

Ingersoll: What attracted Helen Fuller and Helen Douglas to each other? Evelyn Chavoor told me that they were people--I can't remember whether she said, struck sparks, or struck chords, but she felt there was a very strong--

Keyserling: Yes, theirs was a strong and lasting friendship. I know Helen Fuller went up to visit the Douglasses in Vermont for a week or more many summers. Theirs was a close relationship; enormous mutual respect and great affection. When one thinks of the occasions when we were down there in Washington, Virginia, one remembers that there was a memorial service for Helen Fuller, several weeks after her death. Helen Douglas had just barely recovered from a mastectomy. She was still very weak. She shouldn't have traveled, but she came down from New York, looking very haggard, and very grey. Leon [Keyserling] and I were both speakers at the memorial service. I don't recall that Helen Douglas spoke--I think it would have been too trying for her, since she was far from well. After the service was held at the Rappahannock Library, which Helen Fuller had been so interested in, and had been a benefactor of, we went up to Helen Fuller's house on the top of the mountain, where there was an auction of her possessions. Perhaps there were a hundred or more old friends there, many of whom had been there together on various occasions.

Ingersoll: Were these on two separate days?

Keyserling: No, the auction was held after the memorial service. Helen Douglas, looking very grey, and very cold (it was a windy, cold, even rainy day, as I remember) sat next to the auctioneer out-of-doors. We all felt so deeply for her, both because of her grief and her illness. The auction was to raise funds for the benefit of the Rappahannock Library. Several days later, Helen Douglas came by to our house and left this eighteenth-century wooden lemon squeezer that Helen Fuller had treasured. [Shows wooden implement.] Helen Fuller liked collecting eighteenth-century objects. This was made by hand with wooden pegs. Helen Douglas wanted us to have something that Helen Fuller had especially valued. We weren't at home, sadly; but she left it with a note. So, as we sit here, there's a memento that links Helen Douglas and Helen Fuller, and the three of us.



Ingersoll: I remember reading in an article in the Rappahannock News [October 5, 1972] about that auction, and in that article it said that Helen Gahagan Douglas had read a poem, or perhaps recited it, by Emily Dickinson which had meant a great deal to both Helen Fuller and Helen Douglas. Do you remember that?

Keyserling: Yes, now that you speak of it. And another link that's interesting because one's memories start coming back as one talks. You remember Helen Gahagan Douglas is a painter, and Helen Fuller had quite a large collection of Helen Douglas's paintings. I bought one of them at the auction, and it's upstairs on the wall in the hall. As I go up the stairs, and as I see it, I am reminded always of Helen Douglas and Helen Fuller because this was a link to both of them.

Ingersoll: Oh, yes. According to the Rappahannock News article, there were some six of those paintings that Helen Fuller had had as gifts from Helen Douglas.

Keyserling: Yes, I have one of them--a lasting memento to this association with both of these women.

Then, I might mention another association with Helen Douglas that I think didn't come out of my relationship to Helen Fuller, but it may have. Mary Douglas, Helen and Mel's daughter, was quite often down at Washington, Virginia--either at small get-togethers or these larger ones, and I recall that Mary sought my advice about her career objectives. I've worked with women's employment problems all my life, especially as head of the Women's Bureau. I have always been very much interested in guidance to young people who are trying to find their way. And so, over the years I had some relationship with Mary in trying to help her to feel her way as to where she wanted to go, and what she wanted to do. I'm sorry to say I don't know what she is doing now. That may be irrelevant to our discussion.

Ingersoll: No, it's not irrelevant because we wondered if perhaps a feeling of Mary's particular need through the fifties may have had some influence on Helen Douglas's deciding that she wanted to step back from a political career and be closer to the family? Do you have any way of knowing that?

Keyserling: No, I wouldn't think so. Helen Douglas is a woman of such ability and scope that she can cope with a wide range of things simultaneously, and I don't think she stepped back from the world of politics voluntarily. I think she was bitterly hurt by what happened, and didn't see her way clear to coming back again after her defeat. And that was such an emotional horror for her--the kinds of attacks that Nixon made on her, and this wasn't an

Keyserling: easy thing to put aside.

Then I had another connection with Helen Douglas--her son became a social worker, and worked for some years at the Henry Street Settlement in New York City. I have been on the Henry Street board for many years. And so I would encounter him some years ago at meetings of the board, and on other occasions that brought me to the Henry Street Settlement.

Ingersoll: I didn't know that he'd become a social worker. He must have inherited a good deal of Mel and Helen's interest in social welfare.

Keyserling: Yes, he did.

Ingersoll: Going back to the Helen Fuller-Helen Gahagan Douglas friendship. Is it possible to say any more about the sparks or chords that they struck in each other that would lead to a common interest in politics? Do you feel that a common interest in social welfare, social well-being was a strong tie between them?

Keyserling: Oh, yes it was, and they shared an interest in politics--both domestic and international. There is one other tie that's amusing and which perhaps Melvyn has mentioned. It's not a serious note, but it's so typical that it shouldn't be omitted. Helen Fuller and Helen Douglas both became amused by, and interested in, the flying saucer phenomenon of the time. I think that again was during the fifties. And they had little buttons made with the initials "FFS" printed on them. I still have one in a box upstairs. They were distributed to a select and sympathetic few who wore them on the reverse side of their lapels so that if and when we encountered one of the little people from outer space, we could turn the lapels back and show them that we had been friends of the flying saucers over the years.

Ingersoll: Was this done with a little humor?

Keyserling: Oh, of course--only that.

Ingersoll: Only humor? There wasn't any genuine feeling of belief in the phenomenon?

Keyserling: I remember in the forties being very interested in some of the reports that were then being published. I remember a book by Fred Hoyle which may have been during the late forties or early fifties, in which he pointed out that given the fact there were tens of hundreds of thousands of millions of planetary systems in our universe, and possible other universes, just simply on the basis of laws of chance, the possibility that beings of even



- Keyserling: greater intelligence existed in outer space, was not low. And this was a viewpoint that the two Helens shared. We used to joke about it a good deal, and talk about the probabilities of creatures with greater intelligence than ours. I can remember our joking at one point and saying, "Yes, these flying saucers are from outer space. Our superior friends came down, landed on the planet earth, took a look around and said, 'Don't worry about them, brothers and sisters,' and then went home very reassured that there wasn't any real competition in the universe."
- Ingersoll: Because we were so far behind.
- Keyserling: Because we were so far behind, yes.
- Ingersoll: So, there were light times with all of this?
- Keyserling: Of course. Oh, there was always fun. A party at Helen Fuller's was never drab, it was always fun. It was full of fun.
- Ingersoll: Did you feel that this was a time when Helen Douglas could relax somewhat more than she could in her busy schedule?
- Keyserling: Oh, yes. These were always occasions for relaxation, but since we were all serious people, and concerned with very much the same kinds of issues, we could have our fun and be serious at the same time.
- Ingersoll: What sort of conversations did Helen Douglas and Helen Fuller have? Were they people who agreed with each other generally?
- Keyserling: I think so. I think they agreed.
- Ingersoll: Were there issues on which they disagreed, do you think?
- Keyserling: I can't recall any differences or disagreements.
- Ingersoll: Do you think Helen Fuller tried to influence Helen Gahagan Douglas in any way as far as legislation was concerned?
- Keyserling: All people who know each other and admire each other, try to influence each other. You have bright ideas that you want to convey, and I think Helen Fuller thought it would be helpful to Helen Douglas, and Helen Douglas looked to Helen for help. So that there was constant interaction and mutual support.
- Ingersoll: Was part of this help, do you think, introducing her to people--like yourselves--on the Washington scene? People who had been here longer than she--



- Keyserling: Oh, I don't think Helen Fuller did this purposefully. That isn't the way things work in friendships. You share friends, and you want to bring people together who are of mutual interest to each other.
- Ingersoll: Evie Chavoor saw Helen Fuller as somebody who just knew everybody. Would your view be the same, or would your view be rather different?
- Keyserling: No. I don't think she knew everybody, because there are so many circles in political and social life in a city like Washington, but I would say that Helen knew a great many people in the journalistic and liberal worlds. I don't think of Helen Fuller in the social circuit of embassy cocktail and dinner parties, or even the high-ranking administration circles.
- Ingersoll: Do you think the common interest in poetry and painting was something that was strong between the two women? We talked a little bit about that before.
- Keyserling: Helen Fuller was not a painter herself, and Helen Douglas wouldn't be called a professional "painter", I don't think. She painted for the fun of it. She didn't have outstanding talent in this area--I don't think either Helen would be offended by my saying that her paintings were always imaginative and amusing, and interesting, but they wouldn't have brought great applause in the usual run of commercial galleries. Helen Fuller was devoted to modern art, and I think this was another link, yes.
- Ingersoll: Was there talk about poetry and painting in these social occasions?
- Keyserling: Not very much. They centered mainly on political and current issues.
- Ingersoll: Can you remember any time when Helen Douglas drew on any of your knowledge and experience here in Washington?
- Keyserling: Yes, there were occasions, but I'd have to give that some harder thought. I think she found the Federation of Settlements conference I mentioned earlier interesting because it covered a range of key issues of major concern to her: the need for raising the federal fair labor standards minimum wage level, for meeting consumer problems, for national health insurance (which we still don't have), among them. These were all issues that Helen Douglas was interested in.

You see, the years she was in Congress, from '44 until '50, I was in the Department of Commerce, as chief of the International

- Keyserling: Economic Analysis Division. This wasn't an area where I could have been particularly helpful to Helen. Helen was interested much more in the disarmament issues and not in technical issues relating to foreign trade, the balance of payments, and monetary interrelationships. I don't think I was of much help to her when she was in Congress on the specific issues involved in my work. But I did try to be helpful with respect to such matters as wage and hour legislation, and consumer matters, among others.
- Ingersoll: Is there anything else that we should get down about the friendship between Helen Gahagan Douglas and Helen Fuller before we move on to something else?
- Keyserling: No, as I have said, theirs was a warm, supportive, relationship, and I can't think of anything else to add.

Helen Gahagan Douglas: As a Person and a Politician

- Ingersoll: Fine. I wonder if we could move on then to your own assessment of Helen Gahagan Douglas as a person and as a politician.
- Keyserling: I think she's a woman of tremendous energy and drive, and imagination, wisdom, social concern, purposefulness. I think she was a very effective member of Congress, very influential. Her speeches were extremely effective. She worked very hard. She had clear goals, and worked tirelessly for them.
- Ingersoll: Did you have any contact with her as a strategist in getting legislation through? Did she ever talk about this sort of thing on the occasions you knew her?
- Keyserling: Yes, we talked about it often.
- Ingersoll: Did she seem like a well-organized person to you?
- Keyserling: Oh, very. Extremely well organized, with tremendous drive and energy, and humor, and fundamental human concern. And a desire to get things done.
- Ingersoll: And, of course, that was a point at which your two personalities very much met sympathetically.
- Keyserling: We were sympathetic, I think, for that reason. And we suffered acutely when she ran for the Senate and was so hideously and unfairly attacked. There was very little that any of us could



Keyserling: do here, except suffer for her.

Ingersoll: Do you have any particular thing that might be interesting to get down from your vantage of Washington on that particular 1950 episode?

Keyserling: All it did was to reveal the quality of Nixon, and his evil spirit, and his dishonesty. He later said that he had nothing to do with the defamation, which was totally unfounded and wrong, and said that it was simply staff people who were responsible. But it's rather weird that it was always his staff people who were responsible in his attack on [Jerry] Voorhis and his attack on Helen Douglas, and the whole Watergate mess, and all the dirty tricks over the years in his fight against Democrats. A man is responsible for what his assistants do. And what was interesting about that was that it should have told the country--not just a few of us--about the character of the man whom we were dealing with.

Ingersoll: Yes, yes. Just to go on a little bit to the afterward of the 1950 election. Did you ever get any indication in later conversation that Helen might have wished she had done anything different after 1950 from what she did? Now, Leo Goodman has told me that it fell to him to offer to Helen Gahagan Douglas in the name of [President Harry S.] Truman, to whom he and Walter Reuther spoke after the 1950 defeat, to offer the directorship of the--I think it would have been called at that time--the National Housing Agency. And Leo Goodman told me he's never been so disappointed in his life as when, after spending quite a long time with Helen Gahagan Douglas she felt no, she wouldn't accept that. Has that ever come to your attention? Was that ever discussed?

Keyserling: Yes.. I can understand why. A woman of Helen's integrity wouldn't have wanted to take a position of this kind. It's one of the most technical jobs in Washington. Helen is a great leader of people. Her concerns and skills would have been very valid and useful there, but she didn't have a background of specific knowledge in the detailed administrative and other problems that were in the jurisdiction of the National Housing Agency. I think it was her integrity that led her to say, "No. This isn't an area where I can be at my best. My aspirations do not really move me in that direction."

Ingersoll: She had of course been very interested in housing and the successful housing bill of 1949, but it is a different sort of a job and responsibility, isn't it?

Keyserling: Well. Some of the housing administrators had, I would say, less



Keyserling: ability than she, and less background, because she had had a continuing interest and concern, and had followed housing problems fairly closely. But again I would say it was an innate modesty and integrity. But there may have been other elements in terms of her other responsibilities. That I can't say.

Ingersoll: Well, I appreciate all of this so much, Mrs. Keyserling. I think you've given us insights that would have been very difficult to get from anybody else.

Transcriber: Justan O'Donnell  
Final Typist: Ann Enkoji

### Biographical Note on Mrs. Mary Dublin Keyserling

Mrs. Mary Dublin Keyserling is a consulting economist in private practice in Washington, D.C. She is also a lecturer and writer in the fields of economics and social welfare. She has served in a consultant capacity, in recent years, to many public interest groups, to federal, state and local bodies and to administrative agencies.

Among her recent activities are the following: authored a major study for the Congressional Joint Economic Committee on women and full employment; served as chief author of a comprehensive analysis of the need for federal standards for federally funded child day care services, under the auspices of the Child Welfare League of America, and under contract with the Department of Health, Education and Welfare; directed a survey of day care needs and services in 90 cities, authoring its report, "Windows on Day Care"; lectured in five African countries as an American Specialist for the Department of State.

In 1964, Mrs. Keyserling was appointed by President Johnson to be the Director of the Women's Bureau of the U.S. Department of Labor and held that post until 1969. From 1953 to 1964, she was the Associate Director of the National Conference on Economic Progress, directing research and authoring studies concerned with major national economic problems.

From 1941 to 1953, she held a number of high level economic posts in the federal government, earlier served as Executive Director of the National Consumers League, and taught economics at Sarah Lawrence College.

Mrs. Keyserling is presently Co-Chairperson, with Senator Birch Bayh, of the National Emergency Task Force on Juvenile Delinquency, and is Chairperson of the National Consumers Committee on Research and Education. She is a member of the D.C. Manpower Services Planning Advisory Council; is Co-Chairperson of the D.C. Full Employment Action Coalition; and is a member of the National Task Force on Full Employment. She is a member of the Board of the National Health Security Action Council; the National Federation of Settlements; and the National Consumers League. She is the immediate past Chairperson of the D.C. Commission on the Status of Women and the immediate past President of the National Child Day Care Association. From 1972-1976, she served as a member of the Advisory Committee on Child Development of the National Research Council-National Academy of Sciences, and participated in the preparation of its report, "Toward a National Policy for Children and Families."

A graduate of Barnard College, Mrs. Keyserling completed her graduate studies at the London School of Economics and Columbia University. She holds several honorary degrees. She is the author of many publications in the economics field, on women and children in contemporary society, and on social welfare.

January 1978





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Lucy Kramer Cohen

HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS AND HER SOURCE OF PRECISE ECONOMIC DATA

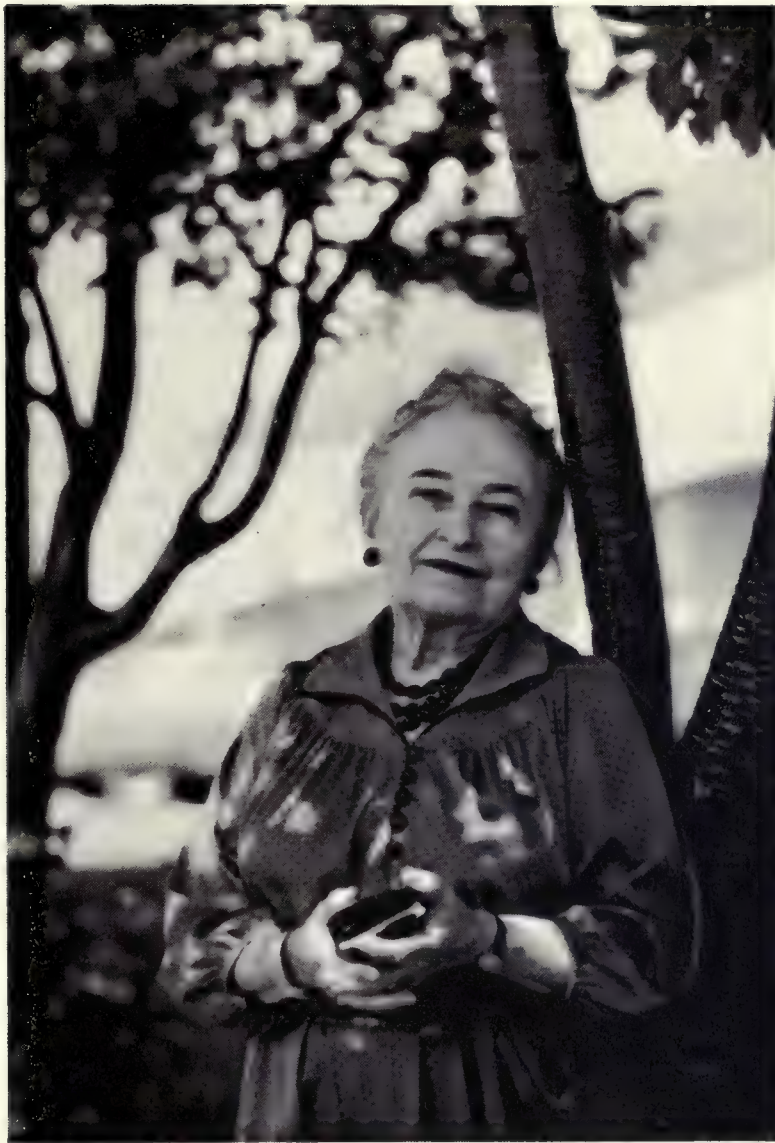
An Interview Conducted by  
Fern Ingersoll  
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LUCY KRAMER COHEN





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## INTERVIEW HISTORY

Although Lucy Kramer Cohen was one of the people I most wanted to interview because of her position as special assistant to Helen Gahagan Douglas, I felt on several occasions that the interview would never occur. While always holding a full-time job, she has been taking responsibility for looking after other people--first two small daughters, then friends and neighbors in need of help--ever since the death of her prominent husband, Felix Cohen. Mr. Cohen was a lawyer in the solicitor's office of the Department of the Interior, and later a professor of philosophy at New York's City College, and law professor at Yale while in private practice after he left Interior in 1948.

We met first in her office at the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare and talked of her work with Helen Gahagan Douglas while we lunched. Now, as then, she works under her maiden name of Lucy M. Kramer. I made a few notes which we used for the later interview which took place in her home in Washington, D.C. about a year later. There, surrounded by pictures of people, her piano, and modern paintings, we sat at her dining room table while she talked. She had seen Helen Douglas only the day before in New York City. Mrs. Cohen's recollection of her first meeting with the congresswoman seemed as vivid as the memories of the previous day.

Fern S. Ingersoll  
Interviewer-Editor

2 October 1978  
Takoma Park, Maryland



## VI HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS AND HER SOURCE OF PRECISE ECONOMIC DATA

[Interview 1: May 29, 1978]

[begin tape 1, side A]

Lucy Kramer [Cohen's] Background: Mathematics, Economics, and Anthropology

Ingersoll: I'd like to know a little bit about your own background before we talk about your work for Helen. What sort of education and experience had you had before you went to work with her?

Cohen: Oh, let me see. I was very much interested all through high school in mathematics. I took four years of math, and four years of Latin, three years of Greek, and just because things were hard I thought I would take them on as a challenge. I would say that I was a rather quiet and retiring person. I just preferred that my mother and the rest of the family would forget that I existed. [Laughter] And they usually did. It was very nice. When you're one of five children and they're all very high spirited, you hope that you will be forgotten and left in the background.

And then from there it was just assumed that I would go to college and law school. I had a very favorite aunt who wanted me to study law. At that time there weren't very many women lawyers. She wanted me to defend the poor and all that sort of thing. And I went to Barnard. I was to go either to Barnard or Radcliffe; those were her two choices. I don't know why I chose Barnard, but I went to Barnard and did very much the same thing, majored in mathematics and statistics and took some more Latin, which I loved, but I loved Greek even more. And then, somehow, I had some very good teachers in economics and statistics. I became interested in that too.

But when I was a freshman, I went to Dean [Virginia] Gildersleeve and I told her that I wanted to study anthropology and



Cohen: astronomy in addition to regular courses. She said those were senior courses and I'd have to wait until then. I told her I might not live to be a senior and I wanted them [laughter] when I was a freshman, and she permitted me to take them. So, I took not only the full course, but worked with [Franz] Boas and Gladys Reichard, who were teaching the anthropology course.

In anthropology and in statistics, which I took, we had to choose a subject and do the research for it, and I chose to do my work in biometrics. That is, I took a lot of Boas's material that he had collected over a period of years on Sicilian immigrants and what was happening, why they seemed to be growing taller and so on, and I did a study for my statistics course with Dr. Clara Eliot, using Boas's data. I found it very interesting.

And I kept up my work in anthropology after I got out of Barnard. I did graduate work in mathematics and probability, and got my master's in one year. All the while I was doing that and for some years afterwards, I was working for Boas in anthropology--biometrics, linguistics, ethnology, and studying them as well. It was during the Depression and I worked for Boas and earned my \$25 a week. I did anything that he needed to have done, whether it was in biometrics or in ethnology, because I was just interested, I guess, or if it was in linguistics, because of the background in Latin and Greek and German. That was very, very useful.

Ingersoll: Now, Barnard was Helen Gahagan's college too.

Cohen: Yes.

Ingersoll: Was she a heroine at that time yet at Barnard?

Cohen: I don't recall. I was not involved in dramatics, and she was long since gone when I entered.

Ingersoll: I wondered if perhaps the young women growing up in Barnard heard more of her because she had been a student at Barnard.

Cohen: Well, they didn't hear of her then because I think that she had gone off to study in Europe and sing there. She didn't become too well known in New York, as I recall, until the early '30s when she was in a play with Melvyn Douglas, when they fell in love and married. But I think that then Barnard people knew that she had gone to Barnard. But I think in those days--maybe it was just me. I don't remember being too aware of that, but that may have been because she wasn't involved in mathematics or anthropology. If she had been involved in anthropology--[laughter]. Although I did know Margaret Mead, and I think Helen and Margaret

Cohen:

may even have been in the same class, I think Margaret Mead may have been a little younger than she, but I'm not sure. I think Helen Gahagan Douglas was not involved in anthropology, so I just didn't know too much about Helen then. I came to know about her in the early '30s. I don't think that had anything to do with her having been a student at Barnard.

And then it was just one of those--you know how you gradually fall into things. It was during the Depression. You took whatever job you could. I think I didn't want to teach. I'd taken the exam for teaching, but I hadn't used it at all. I preferred to work in statistics or anthropology. So, I went ahead and got all my points for a Ph.D. in mathematics, concentrating on mathematical philosophy. But once you've paid for a Ph.D. in one field at Columbia University, you can take work in almost any other field without paying. Since I was working in anthropology as an employee in Boas's office, doing linguistics, biometrics, ethnology. I took all my work for a Ph.D. in anthropology also.

I rather enjoyed working with Boas and I think he enjoyed working with me, first because of the language background. There weren't many people who had studied German, Latin, and Greek. He could explain things and say the tenses were the same as you'd find in Greek. But also in math. He would have these very complicated formulae and, you know, he'd skip three or four stages, and if you were a mathematician you knew what they were. [Laughter] If you weren't (as most anthropology students were not), it was too bad. You were left far behind.

So, anyway, while I was working for him I took work in anthropology as well. So, as I say, had I stayed in New York, all I needed for Boas for anthropology was a thesis and some field work. But that year, the year I would have gone for field work--oh, I've forgotten the man who taught at Yale. [Thinks of name] Sapir. Edward Sapir refused to take any women on that field trip because the year before one of the young women had been killed. She had done things she shouldn't have done and was one of Boas's students. So, he wouldn't take any women, and that's the reason I never went on a field trip, although I have been to Indian reservations many times since then. And that's probably the reason I don't have a Ph.D. in anthropology.

And in mathematics, had I taken it then, I would have wanted to do something in mathematical philosophy, and Columbia at that time had no such courses. You'd have to go to Harvard for that, and in those days they weren't very kind to women. Ruth Benedict used to tell us that when she took a course at Harvard in anthropology, because there were undergraduates in the room, she had



Cohen: to sit in a closet with the door open for fear that she might contaminate them. It's very interesting. And I didn't see any point in subjecting myself to that, but that's where I would have gone had I continued and not married.

Well, I married. That didn't interfere with things for a couple of years. But when my husband was asked to come down [to Washington, D.C.] and draft some legislation, particularly on Indian problems, for the Interior Department, we thought he'd be here for just a year. And so I gave up what I was doing (teaching mathematics in high school), planning to go back at some time in the future, but he never went back nor did I.

Ingersoll: And you both stayed on in Washington, then.

Cohen: But Boas had given me a lot of papers he wanted me to work on when I was down here [in Washington] on the Thompson Indians of British Columbia. I still have them. I've always meant to turn them over to either the Smithsonian or the Museum of Natural History in New York. I never have, but some day I will. [Chuckles] And he also gave me a copy of his own book, The Mind of Primitive Man, which is a rare book.

Ingersoll: Really?

Cohen: Oh, yes. If I can find it, I'll show it to you. He says, "To Lucy Kramer, from the author," which pleased me no end.\*

But that's my background. It's very--oh, what shall I say? Kind of classical in the languages and the mathematics and so on. My teacher in high school had wanted me to be an engineer and I might have considered it, but in those days women as engineers were--I would have preferred to be out on the street, you know, and using a transit and so on. But in those days women were used, if they were used at all, in offices. I think they still are; probably most of the time they are.

Ingersoll: Yes.

Cohen: And so I decided against engineering. But, for me, mathematics was always my security blanket, you know. Two and two were always four.

Ingersoll: Of course. [Laughter]

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\* The inscription is: To Lucy Cohen - gratefully, the author. [Ed.]



- Cohen: Unless you changed the base--you know. Or you could say they were five, provided your hypotheses or your base--
- Ingersoll: Your base is different.
- Cohen: Different, that's right. Given certain things, certain things always follow. So, it was very comforting to work in mathematics.
- Ingersoll: Did you get a job where you could use your mathematics here in Washington when you came with your husband?
- Cohen: Oh, yes. Well, that was during the Depression and when I came to Washington one of the first things I did was work in anthropology. I worked for [Harold] Ickes. They were working on a book on government relations with the Indians and it ended up as the Handbook of Federal Indian Law. But in those days I did a lot of digging because of the background in anthropology, you see. I wrote the chapter on Indian treaties and also the one on government relations with the Indians. It was about the whole history of the Office of Indian Affairs. Ickes was writing a book and everybody else was working, you know, helping him. Then his first wife was killed in an automobile accident in Taos. It was Taos Pueblo. And he sort of lost interest in the book and things Indian for a while.

But I had all this material, and when my husband was asked to do the Handbook of Federal Indian Law, first for Justice and then it came back to Interior, I had all that material. So, that became two chapters in the Handbook of Federal Indian Law, which was the sort of bible for everybody, and now it's being updated. You know, it runs up until either '39 or '42, and it's being brought up to date with whatever legislation has been passed since then. It's being done by a group, the American Indian Law Institute in Albuquerque, New Mexico, connected with the law school there. But the head of it is Dr. Rennard Strickland, who is a professor at the University of Tulsa. He himself is part Indian. I don't know what tribe.

They asked me if I would look over the chapters that I had been involved in [History of the Office of Indian Affairs, and Indian Treaties]. They'd combined them into one chapter on government relations with the Indians, which had the whole history of the Office of Indian Affairs and the Indian treaties. That meant going back to 1700, 1600.

- Ingersoll: Oh. That was a great deal of very scholarly work then.
- Cohen: Well, I'll tell you more about that in a minute. But they asked me if I would also write the foreward to the new edition, which

- Cohen: I expect to do sometime soon, for which they will pay me, which is very nice.
- Ingersoll: Splendid!
- Cohen: Evidently they've got a grant from the Carnegie Foundation. So that the anthropology and so on is still running through my head.
- Ingersoll: Yes.
- Cohen: But one of the reasons I think I enjoy doing work on the Indian Handbook is that you have to dig and you have to be very, very specific. It means going back into the records and so on. And the Handbook of Federal Indian Law, I guess it's called, was based on a forty-six-volume collection of all the laws and treaties and statutes that the government had entered into with Indian tribes from about 1600, whenever it was, even before we were a United States.

My husband and the staff started it at Justice and there was some difficulty there. So, Interior [Ickes] brought everybody back to Interior. He said, "Forget about the Department of Justice." And it was finished in Interior.

During the course of it, I remember reading proof on those forty-six volumes--they were at that time mimeographed. They didn't have xeroxing then. I remember reading proof on those pages, holding the things up to the light, while Gene--that one whose picture you see on the piano--was three weeks old. She had just been born. [Laughter] Reading proof! Everybody who could, came to help on that. And years later, when we were working on the actual handbook, which was based on the forty-six volumes, Evie Chavoor [Helen Douglas's administrative assistant] even helped Felix [Cohen] for a while.

- Ingersoll: Oh, did she?
- Cohen: You see, that was after the defeat of Helen by Nixon--yes, I think so. I think there was a time when she was not with Helen and she helped on the book. I don't know whether it was on this, but she worked with Felix for a while after Helen was defeated. Felix was always very fond of Evie. I am too.



Helen Gahagan Douglas's Appreciation of Precision

Ingersoll: When was it and how was it that you first came into Helen Gahagan Douglas's circle?

Cohen: Well, I think through the Siftons, Paul and Claire, and I had done work at the Interior Department and then, during the war, I worked in Agriculture. I worked on some studies there testing the affect of dried skim milk solids on the diets of pre-school Negro children, testing the statistical results to see if there was any significance. This was a job I got through Dr. Eleanor Hunt, who had been one of Boas's physical anthropology students, and she needed someone with training in mathematics and statistics to do the testing to see whether the results were significant. Now, that's how I came to work for Agriculture.

And when that was over, then I worked for Ickes at Interior on a book on Indian Affairs he had been planning; which, as I said, he never completed because of his first wife's death [Anna S. Ickes]. A far more detailed and comprehensive Handbook then came out under Felix's name, since he had done most of the planning and writing for it, but Ickes wrote a foreword and so did [Nathan R.] Margold, the solicitor.

Then--I'm trying to think. There were so many things. Then I went to work for the War Labor Board during the war and that was just checking on the fringe benefits in union agreements--you know, what things were allowed and not allowed. We had to write opinions on cases before the War Labor Board that went up to the board itself. That's when I got the habit of writing with a carbon. We had no secretaries. That was just analysis and to see whether the letter of the law was being carried out. Again, you have to use, you know, your head [laughter] and a certain amount of common sense and be able to do some calculations and things of that sort.

Ingersoll: Really common sense and precision, wasn't it?

Cohen: Yes, exactly. I think that it was the precision that Helen valued more than anything else. She always said that when I gave her figures, she could count on them.

Ingersoll: You'd had a good deal of experience doing that, then, before you reached her, hadn't you?

Cohen: Yes. Well, when I was at Barnard, when I was a freshman and majored in math, it was during the Depression and everybody was hit rather badly. So was my family. I needed a job. As a fresh-



Cohen: man, during the first summer, I was sent to the National Bureau of Economic Research by the Barnard employment office to do work in statistics, to take the place of people who were going off on vacations. That was when the National Bureau was in an old house on 10th Avenue somewhere in Manhattan. And I think that, again, there it was the precision. And I did work in statistics while I was still at Barnard--several summers for the National Bureau of Economic Research.

And then when I got out of Barnard, that first year I worked for Boas. At that time he would go off every summer to the baths in Germany. His money for hiring an assistant would run out, and he'd go off in May and not come back until October. I didn't have a job and we needed it; the family needed it.

So, I remember going down to the National Bureau and speaking with Frederic Mills and Simon Kuznets. They were two of the heads of the National Bureau of Economic Research at that time. Professor Kuznets and Professor Mills interviewed me, and I remember saying to them, "I'm a very good statistician. I never make a mistake." [Laughter] You know, only when you're twenty or twenty-one do you have that kind of nerve or self-esteem. When I think back on it now, I shudder. I think they were so startled they hired me.

So, I was always doing that during my five years at Columbia after graduating from Barnard. I would work for Boas during the school year, then his money would run out and I would go and find me a job elsewhere. However, as soon as he came back in the fall, whatever I was doing I would quit, and go back to work for him. All the while I was going to school, supporting myself more or less, and helping out the family exchequer. There were--well, I had a rather hard time with it.

Ingersoll: When Helen was so concerned about prices and the attempts some people were making to take the price controls off and that sort of thing--the spring of 1947--was that the first time, then, that you worked with her?

Cohen: Yes. Let me tell you what came before. I worked for the War Labor Board during the war. That's when I think I got to know Leo Goodman. I may have known Leo Goodman before, but not in terms of employment. Of course, there was a group, and if you knew Norman Thomas, and if you were interested in labor and that kind of thing, you were part of it.

So, my husband and I used to run a forum, Capitol City Forum, years and years before that. I'll tell you about that. But I sort of got involved in these things by the back door. I was

Cohen: sort of dragged into it. I preferred not to be in the limelight, you know. [Chuckles] I'm one of those people who doesn't mind helping in doing things, but would rather not be known for it.

Anyway, after the War Labor Board was finished, there was a year or so when we collected information on the different panels, the Meat Packing Commission and the Non-Ferrous Metals Commission, the Steel Commission, the various other commissions. I would take a group out into the field, train them to get all the pertinent background material and then leave them to finish up the reports, and go on. I remember I was in Chicago for the Meat Packing Commission with two or three young kids. I showed them how to get the material necessary for writing a history of the panel's work. And during the course of that work, I got to know a lot of people in the steel and auto industry, you know, all the unions of different industries--steel in Pittsburgh, and meat packing in Chicago, and the lumber in Oregon and also the non-ferrous metals out in Denver. It was really very interesting and challenging. It permitted one to tie things up neatly.

When that was over, I went to work for the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Of course, some of the people who had worked to get information for the War Labor Board panels were taken. And all the while one used analysis, mathematics, statistics, research techniques. And you also sort of learned to write whether you liked it or not; you had to be very precise.

And it was after that time when the panel histories were over, I think--there was a period when I was not working for the Department of Labor any longer. I think they had a period in '46 when they were cutting back, you know, "reducing in force." People were being let go. Anyway, I had enough seniority not to be "reduced," and there was an opening outside of Washington. But BLS wouldn't send a woman to New Hampshire. Too dangerous, and therefore, required a man. I could have fought the BLS action, and won I think, but I would not leave my family. I mean, I preferred not to. And that's how it happened when people were being sent all over the country by the Department of Labor that I stayed here in Washington. That was about '46 or '47. It was just about that time, I think, that the United Auto Workers needed some digging and researched background because they were going into contract negotiations. That's when I worked with Paul Sifton and Leo Goodman. Paul Sifton and Leo Goodman and Don Montgomery (who unfortunately committed suicide not too long after).

I went, you see, from the War Labor Board to the Department of Labor (BLS, Bureau of Labor Statistics) where I worked on collective bargaining agreements, prices and cost of living, et cetera, to the United Auto Workers.



Cohen: Having worked for BLS and the UAW, and getting the background for contract negotiations that were about to take place, I came to know Paul Sifton well, and he knew my work. That was how I came to work for Helen Gahagan Douglas.

When Claire Sifton, his wife, was asked to help Helen Gahagan Douglas in her office as a researcher as she had before, Claire had to turn it down, since she was involved in writing the Children's Bureau publication, "The Child from One to Six." Paul Sifton said, "Well, how about Lucy Kramer?", (because my work at UAW was over, you see.) So, out of a clear sky, I got a call from Claire Sifton (whom I had known socially as well as knowing Paul through mutual friends.). She asked if I would replace her and work for Helen Gahagan Douglas? I was delighted. Well, I had followed Helen's career. I had followed her career in politics and so on, not because she was a Barnard person, but because she was an outstanding woman and very courageous, you see.

Ingersoll: How did she impress you when you first met her?

Cohen: Oh, I thought she was the most beautiful thing I'd ever seen! [Laughter] She was! She had piercing blue eyes and a complete absorption in what she was saying. She talked to you directly as a person, I mean, nothing intruded. [Laughter] I remember I was working for her at the time of her wedding anniversary. I've forgotten which anniversary it was. I remember her husband, Melvyn, was out in California at the time. He sent her the most magnificent roses and said in the accompanying card that he had never once been bored, or something of that sort. It was really very exciting. I've forgotten which anniversary it was, but it doesn't happen often in marriages.

Ingersoll: What a marvelous thing to be able to say. Really.

Cohen: Wasn't it? I think so.

#### Work on the Market Basket Speech

Ingersoll: When you were working on the background for that Market Basket speech, how did you collect those statistics? There were so many of them, weren't there?

Cohen: Well, you know, if you've worked in prices and costs of living at the Department of Labor and you've learned about where sources are and how to weigh them and so on--and at that time I think they were issuing a cost of living index, you remember, you could



Cohen: measure how things had changed. The market basket, I think, was probably Helen's own idea. I don't think there's any question about that. But getting the stuff, the prices, deciding what items to price, she [laughter], I think, left to me. We probably discussed it and so on. And I thought it was a very good idea that we have three levels of consumption--low income, middle, and high. It wasn't just the poor people who were going to be hit by rapidly increasing cost of living, although they probably were hit harder than anybody else, but the fact was that the prices had increased very markedly at every income level.

Ingersoll: How did you get those statistics from the three different levels?

Cohen: We decided to use prices from a fancy food grocery store, a private middle level chain of groceries (a purchaser's wholesale cooperative), and a national chain of low-priced groceries. First I'd watch the newspapers; then I would call the grocers at regular intervals. I would call the central office in each case to find out what the prices were on that particular day for specific commonly bought articles. They knew that we were going to make a study. However, pricing was only one part of the study I mean, getting the prices of specific items. Helen Gahagan Douglas was very dramatic in rolling in with the market basket on the floor of the House, and for her to say that--you probably have the speech, don't you?

Ingersoll: Yes.

Cohen: You know how the things had developed--what year, what interval Helen Gahagan Douglas used, et cetera? Do you remember, in the speech?

Ingersoll: No, I'm not sure.

Cohen: I'm not sure either.

Ingersoll: I can look that up.\*

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\* In her speech Mrs. Douglas said that her basket of groceries would have cost \$10 in June 1946 and \$15 in March 1947. "By very careful management, a housewife can average out her food budget between 30 and 35% above what she paid last June. Do you recall, gentlemen, what the over-all food price rise was for the four years' time under price control, and 30-35% rise in eight months after price controls were removed." Congressional Record, 80th Congress, 1st Session, pages 2038-2040, (March 13, 1947).

- Cohen: But that was important, you see. We had to get the background, what prices were some years before. We worked with 1) Magruder's for the fancy prices and foods (at that time it was owned by the Magruder family although it no longer is); with 2) the District Grocery Stores, (which were sort of middle-income, privately-owned, purchasing cooperative stores), DGS District Grocery Stores. We still have one down here on the corner; they have kept the name, although they no longer have the collective buying arrangement because they had to give up a central warehouse. And 3) the lower-priced national chain. I think it was called Sanitary Grocery Stores, and is now called the Safeway Stores. I believe the "Sanitary" Stores were the precursor of "Safeways," but perhaps it should be verified.
- Ingersoll: They would be the least expensive?
- Cohen: Yes. You know, national chain store kind of thing. And, as I said, pricing was only one part of the speech. But it also meant my looking into the cost of living index and what had happened over a period of time. It was real economic digging. The flip that was given to it was strictly Helen's, you see. I was one of these very precise people and would give her all the basic information I had gathered, but then she would take what she was given and just do what she wanted with it, always relying on the exact figures.
- Ingersoll: Well, that must have been a very interesting time to work together.
- Cohen: Oh, it was. But one would have to do almost everything. I mean, that was one part of it. That was a very important part. But there were other things. Whenever she needed work on any of the bills she was interested in, she knew I'd had a lot of experience with legislation since I had worked on the Handbook of Federal Indian Law and I'd worked on legislation all along. Maybe that's because of going back to the time when my aunt wanted me to be a lawyer. [Laughter]
- Ingersoll: [Laughter] Did you mention earlier that veterans legislation was one of the the things that you worked on with her?
- Cohen: Oh, yes. I'm sure I did. I'm sure I worked on most of these things, even on the--
- Ingersoll: These things in the Blue Book.
- Cohen: Yes. Oh, yes. But getting the background and the basis and the comparisons and that kind of thing. And if you've worked in economic research, you know you just have to know where the sources are: the family income from Commerce, and the prices and



- Cohen: costs of living from BLS, and so on. I don't even stop to think of how one does that. The Library of Congress is necessary. There are all sorts of places.
- Ingersoll: But you had the background for all of these things, then, before?
- Cohen: Oh, yes. Yes, that's right. And I think that's why I may have been especially valuable to her, because I was not only interested in the subject matter but I could go squirrel around and dig up the stuff that she needed.
- Ingersoll: Do you remember, was it over a long period of time that you put the statistics for the market basket together?
- Cohen: No, I don't think it was. I think it wasn't a long time. In fact, it was very urgent. I mean, there were hearings, and I don't think it was a long time. That's what I started with. but then from there I went on to many other things, whatever she was interested in. No, I don't think so.
- Ingersoll: Did you hear the speech in the House?
- Cohen: No, I didn't, unfortunately.
- Ingersoll: Yes, you were busy going on to something else probably by that time.
- Cohen: I don't know why. It never occurred to me. [Laughter] Isn't that terrible! When I think back on it, that was very foolish. Was Evie in the House when she--?
- Ingersoll: I don't know whether Evie was or not, but Juanita Terry Barbee was in the House and she said it was a beautifully given speech, of course, but that there was some disappointment in that there weren't more people there to hear it.
- Cohen: Well, you know, that usually happens, of course.
- Ingersoll: Surely, yes.
- Cohen: We probably should have publicized it more and didn't. I mean, if the newspapers had been notified: I don't know whether they were or [not], I wasn't in that part of the office--I think they'd have all been there.
- Ingersoll: You were a rather different part of the office from Juanita Terry Barbee and from Evelyn Chavoor, weren't you?
- Cohen: Yes. They were on the regular staff and I guess I was just



Cohen: Helen's special assistant [laughter], if you want to call it that. And it was really very exciting working with her. And, as I say, no matter, whatever she needed, she'd say, "Lucy, I need so-and-so," and then I would hop to it and sometimes call up. That's probably where I got the habit of using the phone all the time. I use the phone for everything I need and get practically everything that way. It saves an awful lot of time.

But also, as I say, the work not only included digging and so on and helping her on the background for any legislation when she wanted it for committee meetings and so on, but also when she made speeches in the House, going over to the Government Printing Office and reading proof in the middle of the night. [Laughter] That was a usual thing; I had learned how to do that at Interior when we were working on legislation there, so I rather liked going to GPO in the middle of the night and seeing all those people with the green eye shades and celluloid cuffs. They used to wear celluloid green shades while they read proof. You know the Congressional Record is printed during the night and comes out the very next day. Proof is read all night.

Ingersoll: Yes. Was that a common thing that people would go and read proof on what was going into the Congressional Record?

Cohen: Always. Well, if they really were concerned about what they had said. And a good many people, I must tell you, changed what they said on the floor. It was the usual thing to change it so it would sound better.

Ingersoll: Did Helen do this kind of thing?

Cohen: No.

Ingersoll: She let hers stand?

Cohen: Well, she let hers stand in the sense she knew what she was saying and why she was saying it, and one just read proof to make sure that it was taken down correctly by the stenographers on the floor. I don't think she ever changed it. But it was quite a common thing among members of Congress. I mean, you'd hear people speak in the House. (We did listen.) And then when you read what came out in the Congressional Record, you didn't recognize what had been said. [Laughter]

Relationship to Helen Fuller

Ingersoll: Yes. Now, let's see. What years were they that you worked with Helen?

Cohen: I think '47, '48. Then in '49 I went to work for FAO [Food and Agriculture Organization] and then went back to work with her on the [1950] campaign. You see, earlier, the previous time when I worked for her, I worked for a salary. And I don't know whether it was--I think they were allowed certain additional monies. They're allowed money for clerical help and all that sort of thing and then additional monies, and so I was paid then. But when I went back to work for her in 1950, I was not a paid employee. And that's why Helen Fuller, you know, just handed me that.\* I think that, well, the \$5,000 is what I earned but didn't get. [Laughter] You know?

Ingersoll: [Laughter] Yes.

Cohen: That's where you got the \$5,000, I think.

Ingersoll: Yes. Was that \$5,000 or \$500?

Cohen: Well, \$500 is what I got, but \$5,000 is what I had earned and what I was owed. [Laughter] We just sort of put it on the cuff. Yes, I think that's how the lady got the \$5,000.

Ingersoll: Yes.

Cohen: But that's all right. And, as I say, had she been elected I would have been her administrative assistant. At least that's what she said at that time. And I probably would have been the first woman administrative assistant [to a U.S. Senator]. And shortly thereafter, I think I told you, when she was defeated, she sent me to James Roosevelt and thought maybe I could get a job with him as his administrative assistant.

[end tape 1, side A; begin tape 1, side B]

He had just been elected, I think, to Congress. Anyway, there was an opening and we had a very pleasant lunch hour, but he said that he had gotten into too much difficulty with some of his

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\* In a conversation previous to our taped session, Mrs. Cohen mentioned Helen Fuller's giving her money she felt she deserved for working on the campaign. In my notes from that conversation, I mistakenly wrote \$5,000 instead of \$500. [Ed.]

Cohen: female assistants--you know, there had been a scandal--so he thought that if he got an administrative assistant it better be a man and it better be from California. [Laughter] He said it very apologetically. Well, you don't remember; you're too young. But there'd been some fuss about someone with whom he had taken up, and his wife divorced him.

Ingersoll: Oh, yes.

Cohen: He wasn't taking any chances. At that time I was much younger and slimmer, more appetizing. [Chuckles]

Ingersoll: You mentioned Helen Fuller.

Cohen: Yes.

Ingersoll: You knew her, or were a friend of hers?

Cohen: I knew her only because I'd met her originally through my brother, a trained librarian who had opened a famous bookstore "Sidney Kramer Books". He knew Helen Fuller because she was a newspaper-woman at the New Republic. All the newspaper people used to come to his store on H Street. Because he had had his training in library science (he had a Ph.D.), and had worked for the Library of Congress; had a vast knowledge of books. They used to use him as a sort of secondary library source. Practically all the columnists would come in to his H Street bookstore. I think that's how I first came to know Helen Fuller.

Ingersoll: That was while she was working for the New Republic?

Cohen: Yes. Very often I would do some work for her if she needed background material (I'm trying to think how Ickes came into it after he retired. I had worked for him while he was Secretary of Interior.) He was writing for the New Republic and I was doing some work for him, getting him some background material on Indian matters. I think it was largely through Helen Fuller that I was asked again to help him--rather he asked me to help.

Helen Fuller was a most gracious person. I remember having lunch or dinner with her at her apartment, which was then on 17th Street above a very famous restaurant with an outdoor garden. I cannot remember its name. It was a wonderful apartment, full of carefully chosen and well-kept antique furniture, et cetera, which later Helen Gahagan Douglas helped to auction off for the Little Washington Library in Virginia.

As I say, I got to know her through my brother, but it had nothing to do with Helen [Douglas]. I don't know how she and



Cohen: Helen Douglas became friends, but I'm quite sure the friendship developed because Helen Douglas's position on many problems, especially in the Congress, must have been very much like those of Helen Fuller writing in the New Republic. I don't know when they became friends, but they had many interests in common, and I know that sometimes when Helen Douglas would come down here to Washington D.C. after she left Congress, she would visit with Helen Fuller at her place in Little Washington [Va.], where Helen Fuller had a home.

And I remember one New Year's Eve or perhaps it was the Chinese New Year's--I've forgotten which one--Helen Fuller invited our whole family for a visit. (This was after Felix's death.) Helen Fuller had known my husband. She invited me and the two children, Helen Gahagan, Mary Helen (Helen Gahagan Douglas's daughter), and Mary and Leon Keyserling all over to her house for dinner in Little Washington, and then there were firecrackers! Of course that's what you did on Chinese New Year's. It was marvelous. And my daughters have never forgotten that occasion.

I think, as I said before, that Helen Fuller was a very bright, very keen, very dedicated person, dedicated to the things she believed in. It was only after she died that I learned that she was a lawyer as well as a journalist.

Ingersoll: Oh, she was?

Cohen: Yes. That she had a law degree. She came from somewhere in the South, either Tennessee or Alabama, and got her degrees there. I don't know exactly which state. But her training in the law, I think, was probably one of the reasons she was so involved in legislation.

Ingersoll: Do you think she was the sort of person who was interested in getting any sort of political position herself?

Cohen: No, no. She was one who worked definitely behind the scenes. That's why I appreciated her. She was concerned about issues, and if someone else was in a position to do something--fine. She would feed them whatever was necessary. She was not interested in any political position so far as I know. She could have been very good in politics, but that wasn't the way she worked. She was primarily a journalist, and a very good, keen one with good legal background. No, I don't think she was ever interested in personal politics, i.e. for herself. Of course, I'm sure she could have succeeded over a period of time, but that isn't what she was interested in.

Ingersoll: She and Helen often relaxed together, too, I understand.

Cohen: Well, I don't know about relaxed. But when Helen Douglas came to Washington and when things got kind of hectic, she knew she could go to that place in Little Washington, Virginia which was very quiet and secluded. Just the way people in New York go to Long Island or places like that. (And some people go to Rehobeth, Delaware now.) When Helen Fuller died, she left all the proceeds from her home--she had beautiful antiques--to be auctioned off for the local school and library. Actually, I have two of her engravings that I purchased. I purchased several other things. This is one of the things. [Turns to show interviewer a beautiful wooden lap desk, all of a piece.] After Helen Fuller died--I don't know whether you knew--they had a big auction and Helen Douglas worked closely with the local auctioneer, explaining the history, origin, and background of things.

Ingersoll: Oh, yes.

Cohen: All the proceeds, I think, went to the library and to the school for scholarships in Little Washington, Virginia. This was the sort of thing Helen Fuller would do, you see. I bought this, which I love. This is an old lap desk.

Ingersoll: Isn't that lovely!

Cohen: You sit with it on your lap like this. [Demonstrates how to sit with lap desk.]

Ingersoll: Is it cherrywood?

Cohen: I don't know. It dates from the Revolution.

Ingersoll: Isn't that beautiful and useful. Lovely!

Cohen: And Helen's role there was to explain what the different things were and where they came from. Over the years she and Helen Fuller had spent much time antiquing together, buying china and so on, which was what Helen Fuller loved. She had beautiful things.

My relations with Helen Fuller were very cordial, but it was on a professional level. I had tremendous respect for her and I knew very well how she operated. I never questioned her because she always had some reason for doing certain things. And it's very interesting that she--I don't know where she got that \$500 from. Maybe it was her own. And she just said that she thought I ought to have it, which I thought was really very touching.

Ingersoll: It was, really.

Cohen: The sense of responsibility that she had. It really was.

Ingersoll: That was after the 1950 campaign?

Cohen: Oh, yes. That was long after. When Helen Douglas was defeated and I did not become her administrative assistant as we had planned, I would probably never have received any pay for all the work in her office during the campaign, (because there were many, many debts that had piled up) had it not been for Helen Fuller.

Ingersoll: Am I right that it was Helen Fuller who suggested you go back and work with Helen Douglas for that 1950 campaign?

Cohen: I can't remember whether it was, I just don't remember. It may very well have been. Maybe that's why Helen Fuller felt a responsibility. I'm not sure whether it was Helen Fuller. Helen [Douglas] just called me to work on the campaign, digging facts, et cetera. I was in between jobs then, so I was delighted to go back to work for Helen again (after 1948).

#### The 1950 Campaign

Ingersoll: Do you have any particular memories of that 1950 campaign?

Cohen: Well, I have some, but I was not out in California. I was in the Washington office. Practically everybody else was out in California. I worked in the Washington office which included, I think, Evie Chavoor, when she could get away from California.

Ingersoll: Wasn't there Juanita [Barbee]?

Cohen: Juanita Terry (at that time) Barbee may have been out there with Helen Gahagan, and possibly Evie was here. But part of the office was here and part of the office was out in California.

And I remember the reports we got from California were pretty grim: the kind of campaigning that went on, the billboards that appeared in pink, you know, attacking Helen, [suggesting] that she was a Red.

Ingersoll: Yes.

Cohen: And various articles that were dropped around and in newspaper questioning the legitimacy of her children, et cetera. These were some pretty grim things. I remember Juanita either bringing the



Cohen: articles or sending them back from California. She probably remembers some of those things pretty well, doesn't she?

Ingersoll: Yes.

Cohen: She was right there. As I say, I never went out to California but I did hear about Nixon's activities. I know that Helen waged a very vigorous campaign from early in the morning until rather late at night, going to meetings with people as they came from the shops and the mills and the factories and so on. She claimed that she gained a lot of weight during that time because if you were up from 5:00 a.m. until past midnight, if you were working some twenty hours, you had to eat. [Laughter]

But it was a grim campaign. That's why, you know, when Watergate surfaced, if you knew the way Nixon operated--completely without any morals, without any integrity, lying as a way of life--it wasn't anything--you know, none of us were surprised especially. The magnitude was rather greater than before. But, after all, he had waged the same kind of dirty campaign against Jerry Voorhis just a short time before when he came to the House, so that the 1950 campaign against Helen wasn't in any way surprising.

Ingersoll: Surely, yes. What kind of work were you doing back here in the Washington office during that period?

Cohen: Oh, just whatever was necessary, you know, gathering statistics, information, that kind of thing. I was working full time and all hours, you know, and sort of helping to hold the fort and supplying Helen with information she requested and needed, keeping track of what was happening in D.C.--and also answering requests that came in from constituents in California. That's something we all did too all the time, even when I worked in her office in 1947. The requests that came from constituents, she always answered, and quickly. When the load got too heavy, we just divided it up.

Ingersoll: Did you get a great many of those where there'd have to be very complicated information and statistics supplied?

Cohen: Oh, there were a great many. Oh, yes, yes. And she just wasn't careless about replying to them. If they wanted information, by golly, we got the information. If they wanted material, we got it. Oh, no. She was very, very conscientious and she really was a representative of all the people in California, without question. But then they really were damn fools. I think they got what they deserved. But it was largely the nature of the campaign. I mean, if it had been on merits, I don't think there's any question that she would have been elected.

Cohen: It was pretty grim and I think that that ended her active interest in politics; I don't mean that she isn't interested in politics, but I think she personally had had enough. That's my impression.

Helen Gahagan Douglas's Assistance in Fighting Communist Charges

Ingersoll: Yes. You were saying you were getting information for her in her work. You also told me that story of the time when she was very helpful in getting some information to help you when you were trying to help a friend.

Cohen: Oh, yes!

Ingersoll: What was that story?

Cohen: Oh, that's very interesting. There was a young man. I'll use the name, but you can delete it if you wish. His name was Val Lorwin, who in the early days of the Depression had come down to Washington to work on the Taft papers in the Library of Congress. He was an historian trained at Cornell who was asked by William Howard Taft's family to work on his papers. In the course of his work, while he lived in Washington, he had given refuge to somebody whom he had known at Cornell who had no place to stay. The man lived in their apartment for a while. He was at that time working at Brookings.

In those early days of the New Deal, and the Depression, we were all rather active in the Capitol City Forum. Some of us in the Socialist party here. There were a whole batch of us active in the non-segregated weekly forum: Ken Meiklejohn, Felix, myself, Val and Madge Lorwin and the followers of Norman Thomas.

Well, there was a hearing that was to be held at the Resettlement Administration on the problems of the southern tenant farmers and sharecroppers. They really had had a very, very hard time of it, trying to make ends meet, and they were beginning to organize into a union. They came up to Washington, by invitation of the Resettlement Administration. They came up in a group, both blacks and whites. I remember H.L. Mitchell was one of the white leaders, and I can't remember the name of a black leader. I should. They came up to testify, and Val Lorwin and his wife Madge had an open house, a meeting for them, and gave them food. All the people who were interested in the Southern Tenant Farmers Union, which had a kind of Socialist, Union Theological Seminary background, came to meet them and make



Cohen:       them feel at ease and so on.

Evidently that man who was living in Val's house took that to be very, very subversive, the idea that blacks and whites would meet socially in Washington in the same room. Remember, this was in the mid and late 1930s. He was sure it was a Communist meeting. And he haunted Val for a long time, making secret accusations to the FBI, to the various anti-American committees. Years later, when Val was working as, I think, a labor attaché for the State Department, that accusation surfaced. He was recalled, and his job was in danger.

Well, Val was suspended from his position. He no longer had a job or an income, or prospects of one. He was sort of put on ice while they investigated his "Communist" background. And the man who was the chief informant said that there had been meetings, Communist meetings, at Val's house. I was furious. I was working for Helen Douglas at that time, and I asked her whether we couldn't find out what the color of the Communist party card was. This man said that everybody had waved red cards when they came in to the Southern Tenants Farmers' meeting at Val's house. And without hesitation she said, "Sure."

She asked the FBI for information on the color of the Communist card for that year, that year in question, and also for other years--and the answer came back. She did it very willingly, and almost with a certain amount of zest came back with the information that the Communist party card had not only not been red that year, but had never been red. They never used a red card. And that was the basis for Val's defense--even though the case lasted for several years after that and Val Lorwin was without a job, although the University of Chicago's President [Robert] Hutchins had appointed him to a position as labor historian so that he would not lose his professional status. A whole batch of us gathered together and collected money for his legal fund. Ben O'Sullivan--I don't know whether you know him--he's practicing law in New York. Ben O'Sullivan was his lawyer although I'm sure his financial reward was not at all commensurate with his valiant and sustained efforts for Val.

I've always thought that Helen's participation in this was very, very important in having the whole thing dropped. When the man who was the informant saw that there was just no basis for his accusation, he not only didn't appear at the trial but none of the investigators or detectives appeared. The whole thing was dropped and he [Lorwin] was reinstated by the State Department, got his back pay from the State Department, and immediately resigned. He went West--he was offered a job teaching at the University of Oregon at Eugene, where I think he still is.



Helen Gahagan Douglas's Sources for Special Knowledge

Ingersoll: Oh, splendid. Could you tell me any more about Helen's choice of specialists, how she got people besides yourself to work in the office, whom she got, and that sort of thing?

Cohen: Well, she didn't get them to work in the office. [Tape off briefly during break for refreshments.]

Ingersoll: You were just going to tell me about the specialists who came in from time to time to work in Helen's office.

Cohen: No, they didn't come in to work in Helen's office. Whenever she needed some information, she would call, whether they were in government or outside the government, and say, "I need information on such and such." And, by golly, they'd either come in person, because she had such charm, or else they would immediately send the material that she needed, so that when she was going to make a speech or was going to do something in support of legislation or against legislation, she got the best qualified people to back her up, give her information. I mean, she didn't sort of go off half-cocked. When she made a statement on the floor or when she was for or against legislation, she knew what she was talking about.

And she would sort of drag everything out of her sources she could if they came in person, ask very intelligent, very intense questions. So, as I say, I don't think there was anybody who ever turned her down when she needed help or information.

Ingersoll: How would she learn the things that were rather technical? For instance, with your statistical work, the economics that you had in your background, could you pass that on to her fairly easily?

Cohen: Oh, yes! She was a very bright woman, not only well-educated, but intelligent, interested in her subjects, in people and their problems. She had lived this kind of thing. It wasn't something new. You know, she had lived all through the rise of Hitler, seeing it coming when she was singing in the opera at Salzburg. That's why she left Europe and returned to the U.S. to warn people. She had lived through economic depression, a very long and crippling depression. I don't know what her family background is, but I'm sure that there was business and things like that in the family. So, she wasn't a newborn child. She was, as I say, a very intelligent woman who also felt the need of getting good basic information. She didn't always have it at her finger tips, --nobody could-- and she didn't claim to be an economist or an anthropologist or a sociologist. But she knew enough to know

Cohen: where the sources were, and I think that, as far as I'm concerned, that's the basis of knowledge. I mean, that's my notion of what a good education is: Know where to get the information, accurate, current, reliable. And she did.

Ingersoll: Had she had some basic economic training at Barnard too, do you think?

Cohen: That I don't know. I don't know anything specific about that. But anybody going to Barnard gets a good education, so--

It's very interesting. I was at someone's seventieth birthday party in Washington yesterday. I had just come back by plane from New York, from visiting Helen [Douglas], got a taxi, and had him wait at my home while I dropped my bags, and then went out to Silver Springs for the birthday party. And there I met again Kitty Clift, who is--you didn't know Charles Clift, who just died?

Ingersoll: No.

Cohen: Well, Kitty Clift was Barnard, 1933, I guess, a very beautiful woman who was president of a local club and so on. She said she always disliked Barnard when she was there, but she had discovered that the people who have been educated at Barnard are a different breed. It's very interesting. She said, "I don't know what there is about Barnard, but they turn out people--you can almost always tell somebody who has had training at Barnard, because they've had a rather wide, good, basic education." And I thought it was very interesting. It certainly explains Helen Gahagan.

Ingersoll: It was my mother's college, so it particularly interests me to hear you say that.

Cohen: Oh, really! When did she go?

Ingersoll: Oh, she was there in the teens. I think she graduated in 1919 or something like that.

Cohen: About 1921 was Ruth Bunzel's year of graduation (she was one of Boas's special anthropologists,) and Margaret Mead was about 1925. And Helen would have been in between the two.

Ingersoll: In between, yes.

Cohen: She was born in 1900, so she must have been about, you know, eighteen or nineteen, when she entered Barnard--it might have been in your mother's year.

Ingersoll: It was very close, I'm sure.



Cohen: Helen Gahagan Douglas was a person who, as I say, knew what she wanted, and she knew where to get it, and she knew how to weigh it and evaluate what she was given. She just didn't swallow it. And then when it came forth, it came forth as she understood it and with her own very definite imprint. I mean, there was no question that Helen Gahagan Douglas was issuing, stating, these things. She just didn't take what you gave her and read from it or anything like that. That's why it was fun working with her. Also, you never knew what would come out. It would be the same thing, but you might not recognize it! [Laughter]

Also, you know, her training as an actress--she was a marvelous actress and she'd make the most of a situation or of a speech or of information that she had and so on. You know, you don't always get that combination of intelligence, beauty, and acting ability. [Laughter]

Ingersoll: Yes, right.

Cohen: She really was quite something. Still is.

Anecdotes: Helen Gahagan Douglas's Humor, Self-Acceptance,  
Concerned Laissez-faire Attitude Toward Children

Ingersoll: And certainly there must have been a sense of humor too, wasn't there?

Cohen: Oh, there always was! Of course, yes. She could laugh and enjoy things. I was very serious. [Laughter] I always startled her. [Laughter] You know.

Ingersoll: [Laughter] "Little Lucy." Didn't you tell me that she called you in those days--?

Cohen: She still does.

Ingersoll: And still does.

Cohen: Oh, yes. Well, because she was, you know, rather tall and stately, and Evie Chavoor was tall, and Melvyn Douglas, her husband, was tall. Everybody was sort of tall. Juanita Terry wasn't, but she was of normal height. Anyway, I was four feet, eleven inches, and slimmer too. I gave the impression of being smaller than I was. [Laughter]

Ingersoll: You're still rather small in height.



Cohen: Yes, but not in width.

Ingersoll: I mentioned the humor because I thought [of] that story you told me that came from the time when there was the auction of Helen Fuller's things from her estate, and Helen Douglas, who wasn't well, still had this marvelous grace and sense of humor.

Cohen: Oh, yes! I told you that story about the auction.

Ingersoll: Tell the story, won't you?

Cohen: You have it down [on the outline]. Her job at the auction was to explain, you know. What do you call it? A "shill." Isn't that what it is? A shill will come on and explain the value of various things, its history, and so on, and push its value up.

Ingersoll: Oh, yes.

Cohen: And sort of drum up business and see that the bids would be answered. This was all going for a good cause. All the proceeds were to go to the library at Little Washington, Virginia where Helen Fuller had lived and worked. That was Helen Gahagan Douglas's role. When she was getting dressed (she had just had a radical mastectomy), someone asked why she didn't wear one of those prosthetic devices to make her bosom look normal. Actually she looked lovely. She was wearing some kind of Chinese dress where it didn't make any difference what she wore underneath. If you were Chinese, you'd be flat--well, I won't make any comment. But her comment was that if Picasso could paint women with three breasts, why, she could very well be a woman with one breast [soft laughter]. She refused to do anything about artificial gadgets. I thought, yes, she certainly did have a sense of humor about herself and, of course, I think she's remarkable in the way she's handling the recurrence of illness at this time. As you know, she's writing her autobiography up to a certain point; I don't know whether it ends when she entered Congress or left. But she said, "Well, if I don't finish it, somebody else will." As simple as that, you know.

Ingersoll: Yes. I thought the remark you told me that she made once concerning her role toward children, a mother's role toward children, was very interesting too.

Cohen: You're thinking of that time of Gene. [Laughter]

Ingersoll: Yes. Will you tell [about that]?

Cohen: When my daughter Gene was about to marry, or wanted to marry--

Cohen: let me start again. She had taken part of a year abroad to study, and while she was there--she was all of eighteen or nineteen--in Austria (Vienna), she had met an Austrian man who was, oh, maybe eight, nine, or ten years her senior and who was of a different faith, and as a young boy had served in the Hitler Youth. She had decided she wanted to marry him and I was very, very upset at the idea. I said that my parents had left the Austro-Hungarian empire years before just to get away from oppression, autocracy, anti-semitism, and here she was going to marry someone who was an Austrian, with a different background, difference in age, difference in religion; I was very, very, very upset. I remember driving with Helen somewhere, up towards Rockville, [Md.], but what we were doing there I don't know. And she said, "Now, it's her life. You have to let her be. Your job as a mother is just to be there to pick up the pieces if it doesn't work." [Laughter] It's worked beautifully. I love my son-in-law Kurt. I'm glad I followed her advice. Gene and Helen had better insight than I.

Ingersoll: Do you remember any of those other things that she may have said through the years that were particularly telling about her character?

Cohen: No, I don't. There was the time--I think I told you. She was very much concerned about her children, and my impression is that one of the reasons her family moved East--she may not have told you this and maybe I'm just imagining it. But her son, who has since become a very good psychiatric social worker and analyst and so on, a practicing psychologist, was out West. She was here and the children were out with their father, out on the West Coast. He was doing motion pictures. And her son was getting too involved with Eddie Robinson's son, who was then always in and out of newspapers and jails, and reckless driving, and this and that. I think that she thought it would be best if the family were all together. That's when they moved East, to Washington, and after her defeat by Nixon they moved to New York. I think that was one of the reasons. It may have been that Melvyn was going back into plays and she was East here, you know, working in Congress. So, it was just easier to have the family together.

It was when they came East that Peter--his name, I think, was Gahagan Douglas, but he didn't like it and he called himself Peter. Peter, Helen Fuller, Helen Douglas, and my husband Felix and I all had dinner one night at the Nanking Restaurant at Ninth and New York Avenue, so that Peter could ask Felix questions, oh, about the law, about Indians, about politics, and so on.

And, of course, I think Helen had great respect for Felix's judgment, even though he was very young. It was before we had



Cohen: any children, I think. But what effect the discussion and dinner had on Peter, I don't know. He didn't go into law. [Soft laughter] And he did drop out of college (I think you know that), married, and then went back to school after some years.

Ingersoll: Yes.

Cohen: I worked on a DHEW [Department of Health, Education, and Welfare] task force on social work, called "Closing the Gap in Social Work Manpower." The Director of the study, named Dr. Dorothy Daly, had been Peter's teacher at N.Y.U. [New York University]. She claimed that he was probably the best student she had ever had in social work. When Dorothy Daly came down here I worked with her on that task force and we got out a publication called "Closing the Gap in Social Work Manpower." Dorothy Daly and I have remained friends all this time. When she left HEW she became head of the school of social work at Catholic U[niversity] and only recently has retired from that post and gone back into the government. But she was there for five or six years. She said he was probably the best student she had ever had either at NYU or Catholic U. He was older than most students in the class, wiser, more experienced; had lain fallow for a while. Isn't that interesting?

Ingersoll: Yes, it certainly is. But it must have been very hard for both of those two [Peter and Mary Helen] children to have such prominent parents.

Cohen: Probably, but, no, they didn't seem to have suffered from it.

Ingersoll: Didn't they?

Cohen: Oh, no. Have you met Mary Helen?

Ingersoll: No. I've heard of her, but I haven't met her.

Cohen: She was there [at Helen Douglas's home] yesterday. She's a doll. I'm very fond of her. She's bright as a whip. She and her father--he was down here some years ago in a play and I remember visiting them at their hotel (I think she was about thirteen at that time) became involved in mathematics in five minutes flat. She is, I think, one of the most amazing young women I know, Mary Helen. She's artistically very talented--a fine painter; a teacher of art to disturbed children, a designer of scenery, an actress. I don't know whether the "Helen" was for Helen Douglas or Helen Fuller. I don't know which.

Ingersoll: Oh, that's interesting. It could have been for either, couldn't it?



Cohen: Yes. I don't know. I don't know whether--no, she must have been born by the time Helen Fuller and Helen Douglas came to know one another. I'm sure it started here when Helen entered the Congress, not before, and probably Mary Helen may have been born. She's about the same age as Karen. She was probably born in '40. No, she--Do you know how old Mary Helen is?

Ingersoll: I think that she had been born before they came here to Washington.

Cohen: Yes. Yes, there were two children, so it must have been before. The election was '42, so it was '43 when they came. Yes. Well, she's a little older than my younger daughter. I think I may have told you this. One time Helen asked me if I would help her husband on a speech he was going to give before the annual meeting of the American Veterans Committee. (It was formed to offset the American Legion. He had, I think, enlisted in the army in World War II as a private by choice. They wouldn't draft him because he was married and had children.) I said, "Sure." I did a lot of digging for the speech as background. He told me what he wanted to talk about and I did a lot of research and gave him all the written material. Then at the last minute, he said, "I think I'll speak extemporaneously." And he did. He has that marvelous gift. He also had a very keen mind.

Ingersoll: Yes.

Cohen: I think he had read practically all my father-in-law's writings. Morris Raphael Cohen was a rather well-known professor of philosophy at City College.

Ingersoll: Isn't that interesting.

Cohen: [He is] very much interested in philosophy and mathematics and in various social pressing problems. He too is a very well-educated, intelligent, well-rounded person; like Helen. And when he plays some of his stage roles, he plays them because he really believes them. [Chuckles] They're a very interesting couple, I think. They still are.

But at the last minute he said he thought he'd speak off-the-cuff, without notes, [extemporaneously] and I'm told he did a remarkable job.

Ingersoll: Isn't that interesting!

Cohen: Yes.

Ingersoll: Well, we're just about at the end of this tape. Thank you very much.

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HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS PROJECT

Chester E. Holifield

HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS: PERSPECTIVES OF A  
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA COLLEAGUE

An Interview Conducted by  
Ingrid Winther Scobie  
in 1978

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CHESTER E. HOLIFIELD





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## INTERVIEW HISTORY

Time of Interview: Evening, March 23, 1978

Place of Interview: Home of Mr. and Mrs. Holifield

Chester E. Holifield, or "Chet" as he is affectionately called, represented California's Nineteenth Congressional District (part of Los Angeles) from 1942-1976, or from the 78th to the 94th Congresses. From 1946 until he retired, he enthusiastically and untiringly served as a member of the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy and as the committee's chairman for several years during the 1960s. From the very beginning of atomic energy control questions, he was recognized for his views; for example, in 1946 President Harry S. Truman appointed him a member of his Special Evaluation Committee on Atomic Bomb Tests at Bikini Atoll. Although Helen Gahagan Douglas and Holifield were not particularly close professionally or personally, their relationship was one of mutual respect.

For all of these reasons, Holifield's perceptions of Helen Gahagan Douglas, a fellow member of the California congressional delegation from 1944-1950 and an active spokesperson for civilian control of atomic energy, have great merit and belong in the Douglas project. He has contributed valuable insights which help to place Douglas in the context of her congressional colleagues. The interview was brief because the Oral History Program of the Claremont Graduate School (Claremont, California) had previously conducted a series of excellent interviews about the entirety of Holifield's distinguished career.

The interview took place in the tastefully decorated and comfortable living room of the Holifields' handsome, two-story row house, located on the beach and situated among other beautiful beach homes in Balboa, California. The Holifields extended an immediate warm welcome to the interviewer upon arrival, despite only brief contact previously by phone. Although she had only brief notice, Mrs. Holifield had already set a third place for dinner. This lovely gesture clearly established a feeling of support and interest in the interview and in the relationship between the interviewer and the Holifields.

During the actual interview, Mrs. Vernice Holifield was in an adjacent room working, but periodically she was called into the living room to clarify a point, to confirm a reaction, to recall a name--evidencing a long-term, close relationship between the two. Mrs. Holifield had gained first-hand experience working in her husband's congressional office a number of years after their four daughters had been reared.



Dinner followed the interview and then a brief orientation, upon the interviewer's request, to the numerous reminders around the house of Holifield's varied and challenging experiences as a congressman. Each award and photograph, including a series of large autographed pictures of each president under whom Holifield served, evidenced the major contribution Holifield made in public life and the personal affection and esteem held for him by his colleagues, associates, and friends.

Ingrid W. Scobie  
Interviewer-Editor

24 November 1978  
University of California at San Diego

VII HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS: PERSPECTIVES OF A SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA  
COLLEAGUE

[Interview 1: March 23, 1978]  
[begin tape 1, side A]

Atomic Energy Act of 1946

- Scobie: I don't know if you feel the need of any refreshing, but I have a four-page summary of what happened between the time when [Senator James O'Brien] McMahon introduced his bill to when it passed. Do you want to just glance over it? It's very brief.
- Holifield: Sure. Where did this come from?
- Scobie: That comes from a book called Government of the Atom: The Integration of Powers (N.Y., Atherton Press, 1963), pages one to five. It's on the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy [JCAE], the legislative committee that you were chairman of for so many years which was created by the Atomic Energy Act of 1946. It's Harold P. Green and Alan Rosenthal.
- Holifield: Yes, I know Green. I've known him for many years. I don't know Rosenthal.
- Scobie: And then I read another book, The Atomic Energy Commission by Corbin Allardice and Edward R. Trapnell. Do you know that one?\*
- Holifield: Yes, I have that book. Trapnell was working for the Atomic Energy Commission at the time, and Allardice was the Staff Director of

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\*An excellent summary of the legislature background of the Atomic Energy Act is in Richard G. Hewlett and Oscar E. Anderson, Jr., A History of the United States Atomic Energy Commission, Volume I, The New World, 1939-1946 (University Park, Penn.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1962).

Holifield: the J.C.A.E. under W. Sterling Cole when Cole was to be chairman of the committee. It alternated back and forth between the House and the Senate every two years. I know in substance about what this summary covers.

Scobie: Perhaps we could start with the committee hearing process for both the May-Johnson and the McMahon bills.

Holifield: Fine. I was by chance a junior member on the old House Military Affairs Committee, which had jurisdiction over the May-Johnson bill. We had a Naval Affairs and a Military Affairs Committee in the House. Andrew [J.] May was the chairman of the Military Affairs Committee. Mel [Emory H.] Price and I were fourth and fifth from the bottom of the committee.

When the May-Johnson bill was sent to the House by the Secretary of the Army, it was sent also to the Senate. There was no contest for jurisdiction in the House. It was sent to the House Military Affairs Committee. Andrew May was the chairman of it. In the Senate there was a contest between [Millard E.] Tydings, who was the chairman of the Military Committee, and [Edwin C.] Johnson, former governor of Colorado, who was chairman of the Interstate Foreign Commerce Committee. Both of those men wanted the bill. Vice-President [Alben W.] Barkley was the president of the Senate, and allotted the bills to the different committees. Well, he was faced with those two giants, old-time members of the Senate, who both wanted it. It was not until December [1945] that Brien McMahon the young new Senator from Connecticut introduced the bill SB 1717, which became the McMahon bill, and was an alternative to the May-Johnson bill.

Scobie: What was Truman's initial stand?

Holifield: The May-Johnson bill was the administration bill, although the president later disavowed support. The McMahon bill was put together by James [R.] Newman and Herbert Marks. Those were the two staff men that McMahon was fortunate enough to get. They were both very brilliant, brilliant staff people. They really drafted, over a series of months of hearings, the McMahon bill. The bill in the House, the May-Johnson bill, was considered in the House for only a day and a half. Then the only question I heard the chairman of the committee, Andrew May of Kentucky, ask was, "How is this going to affect my coalfields in Kentucky?" That was the extent of his concept of what he was dealing with.

During the fall of 1945, a lot of scientists came to Washington. [Albert] Cahn was one of them. There were quite a number of the scientists who were very much disturbed about this new discovery going into the hands of the military alone. They contacted me and others on the Military Affairs Committee. Andrew May was



Holifield: completely under the subservience of the Pentagon at that time, and the military people and the defense establishment. He just steamrollered the thing through. I had two scientists--Dr. Harold Urey and the Austrian scientist, Dr. Leo Szilard, who wrote The Voice of the Dolphin, who were opposed to this May-Johnson bill. Mel Price finally persuaded May to let these two distinguished scientists testify in opposition. They wanted to testify, so Mel Price and I went to see Andrew May, and got him to open up the hearings for one morning more.

Scobie: Helen says that she had heard that May was not going to have any hearings so she hastily called a press conference to publicize this fact. Do you remember anything about this?

Holifield: Well, if she says she did it, I'm sure she did. I don't have any remembrance of it, and I have no remembrance of them not going to hold hearings, although they never held adequate hearings.

Anyway, we had hearings for the next morning, and then May closed the hearings; the committee went into executive session, and May called for a vote on the bill and it passed right away. As I remember, we had twenty-seven members on the committee at that time, and all of them voted for it except Mel Price and I. I wrote the minority report and Mel signed it [copy included at end of interview].\* We were the only two to come out for civilian control of atomic energy. I criticized the May-Johnson bill for a number of its provisions and for the lack of provisions in it. For example, the bill only suggested a part-time commission composed of members of the military establishment. I thought it should have a full-time commission because of the importance of this new discovery.

The May-Johnson bill only conceived of atomic energy as a weapon source. I had a much broader concept of it. I conceived of it as a source of energy that would probably change the complexion of the world powers and possibly world economy. I felt that it had peacetime applications, and of course we have over two thousand peacetime applications now, including the making of electricity.

The Senate was having a contest over which committee would have jurisdiction of it, and that gave us time to organize a nationwide resistance to the original May-Johnson bill. Finally, Vice-President Barkley decided to have a special committee to get out of this struggle between these two very high-powered Senators. So as to avoid making a decision he decided to appoint a special Senate committee to study this matter. But I think McMahon had already gotten in touch with Jim Newman, one of the scientists

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\*See page 184.

Holifield: that wanted civilian control. It is my belief that he and Marks and McMahon had drafted their own bill. Now, they may have used some of--they may have had some conferences with [Arthur H.] Vandenberg, I'm not sure. But it was, at that time, a Democratic administration and Vandenberg was a Republican. Now he may have had a bill, I don't know. Vandenberg helped, I know. He helped with the passage of the McMahon bill.

Scobie: As I understand it, Vandenberg could see that delay action was necessary. So he proposed a joint Senate-House committee to investigate the possibility and all the ramifications. McMahon put in a similar kind of a bill as well. His bill was used as he was a Democrat.\*

Holifield: He probably did, because the McMahon bill did provide for a joint legislative committee, which was an innovation because we didn't have any joint legislative committees that had the power of reporting legislation. So the Senate took several months of hearings, and in the meantime, we worked among the university people and the scientists. We started fomenting opposition to the May-Johnson Bill.

Scobie: Where did Helen figure into this?

Holifield: Well, Helen was a new member of the House at that time. She had taken Tom [Thomas F.] Ford's place. I was elected in the fall of '42. Well, we had quite a group of liberal congressmen that got together on this. Jerry Voorhis, who had been there since '37, was one of the leaders, and Helen was a very enthusiastic supporter of civilian control. But she was not on any committee that had jurisdiction over any atomic energy bill. She was on Foreign Affairs Committee and something else at that time.

There were meetings in Washington, and I remember that I obtained a room of the House in the old building of the House, where the Democrats and Republicans held their party caucuses. We had a big meeting and scientists from all over came, and they made speeches. We got as many of the congressmen to go to this meeting as we could.

In the summer of '46, the McMahon bill passed in the Senate. Then it came to the House for debate. A lot of amendments were added.

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\* It was always customary to call up a Democratic member's bill in a Democratic administration and vice versa.



- Holifield: The conferees met, and Ewing Thomason of Texas and Andrew May were the two top people on the Democratic side. They undoubtedly were the conferees. Ewing Thomason was given a federal judgeship shortly after that by Truman. May went to the penitentiary for bribery. [Laughter]
- Scobie: Truman signed the bill August first of '46.
- Holifield: By that time, there was a lot of support for civilian control.
- Scobie: To what do you attribute this new support?
- Holifield: In my opinion it was due to the merit of the principle of civilian control, plus the fact that the scientific community was almost unanimous in its support for civilian control and the university people were interested in it. There were groups in the different universities that came out very strong--wrote letters and held meetings throughout the United States on civilian control.
- Scobie: Do you think that the lobbying activities of Albert Cahn's committee and the Federation of American Scientists played an important role?
- Holifield: Yes, I do. Yes, I do because they both did a good job. William Higginbotham and a number of the old-timers like Eugene Rabinowitch were in that federation. It became a very well-organized group.
- Scobie: How well organized was Cahn's group?
- Holifield: I can't remember how well organized it was. The federated group went on to put out a magazine which Rabinowitch edited for years. [Science and Public Affairs]

But I actually was not present for the final vote because President Truman had appointed me to go to the Bikini tests as the Democrat in the House. A fellow by the name of Walter G. Andrews ["Ham"] was the Republican representative. He was the ranking Republican on May's Military Affairs Committee.

I had to make my choice between accepting this appointment and being present for the vote. Speaker Rayburn called me in and said, "Chet, President Truman wants two members of the House Military Affairs Committee to go to the Bikini tests, a Democratic and Republican member. Because you came out for civilian control and wrote the minority report against the May-Johnson bill, I will appoint you as the Democratic representative if you'd like to go." Well, as I say, I was way down, I was fourth from the bottom. All the rest had voted against the civilian control, so that the Speaker honored me by choosing me. Of course, I was very anxious



Holifield: to go. I didn't know when the bill would come back from the Senate. I wasn't aware it had passed until I had returned and read about it in the Congressional Record.

Helen Gahagan Douglas: Some Informal Observations

Scobie: Would you be able to evaluate in general terms, how Helen would rank in terms of influence on this issue?

Holifield: I doubt that she was influential at all. She was very enthusiastic so I don't mean this in a derogatory sense. But the members of the committee that handles the subject matter of the legislation usually have the right to the time on the floor. The time is controlled by the chairman. I can't remember now whether she had any time on the floor to argue or whether she put material into the record. So I say Helen did not have much influence as a matter of my observing that a young new member doesn't have much chance of becoming important. In fact, I wasn't important enough to get but two votes, my own and Mel Price's on the committee, and I'd been there four years.

Scobie: This is important as an elaboration to the written record.

Shifting subjects a bit, when Helen came to the House, she was elected chairman of the Democratic freshmen, a position I believe you had in '42. Why would she have been elected?

Holifield: Well, she was prominent as an actress. She had some national recognition as an actress. She was a friend of Mrs. [Eleanor] Roosevelt's, she had accompanied Mrs. Roosevelt to some of the itinerant labor camps and had a very warm friendship with her, and also with Henry Wallace, because of her activity in the itinerant labor camps before she became a congresswoman. I want to be very careful and not say something that would be considered derogatory, because I always admired her. We were great friends, you know.

But Helen was very emotional and intense in her advocacy. There's no doubt in my mind that that--I wouldn't want to take any credit away from her--that she was active in our liberal group at that time. There was John Coffee of Washington and George Outland from Santa Barbara, and Andy [Andrew J.] Biemiller, who's now George Meany's assistant in the AFL [American Federation of Labor]. He was a young Wisconsinite--there were a number of these young people that were vigorous at that time.

Scobie: Do you think her friendship with the Roosevelts assisted her in getting places faster in Congress than if she hadn't had it?

Holifield: Yes, I think so.

Scobie: In what ways?

Holifield: Well, this is not based on any facts that I remember, but for example she wanted to get on the Foreign Affairs Committee, and she was put on the Foreign Affairs Committee. This was quite an accomplishment for a new member.

[end tape 1, side A; begin tape 1, side B]

I would assume that she probably used her influence with Henry Wallace and with Mrs. Roosevelt to get their support for her committee assignments.

Scobie: Could you elaborate?

Holifield: Well, they'd just call up Mr. Rayburn and say, "Mr. Speaker, I hope it will be possible for you to put Helen Douglas on the Foreign Affairs Committee." That's all it would take, unless there was some definite reason not to do it. For example, if there had only been one vacancy and he'd already promised it, she wouldn't have gotten it.

Scobie: Did Mrs. Roosevelt herself have the kind of influence necessary to get an appointment for Helen, or would it have been Franklin himself?

Holifield: That would be pure conjecture on my part. She could probably give you an answer to that. I'm just assuming that she used her contacts--she had contacts with Harold Ickes, and with Wallace and with Mrs. Roosevelt, and through Mrs. Roosevelt, she undoubtedly met the president.

Scobie: To what would you attribute her appointment as alternate delegate to the United Nations?

Holifield: Well, I would assume that she had some help. I would say that it was probably Mrs. Roosevelt with Mr. Rayburn.

Scobie: Would Rayburn have appointed delegates to the U.N.?

Holifield: Yes, that's from the House.

Scobie: Did Eleanor continue to have a great deal of influence in the government even after her husband died?



Holifield: Well, she was respected. To my knowledge she never swung her weight around in a political way for individuals. But I am sure that Mrs. Roosevelt, being a woman, and Helen being a woman, that she would have helped Helen.

One of the reasons I know that they were very warm friends was that we hadn't been there more than a month (late January or February, 1943) when Helen called me and my wife up and invited us to go to the theater, the National Theater. She had six tickets from Mrs. Roosevelt for the presidential box, up on the side. [Laughs and asks Mrs. Holifield]. Do you remember who else was there except Helen and us?

Mrs. H.: Helen didn't even go. It was just us.

Holifield: Well, there were more than two people in the box.

Mrs. H.: I don't remember anybody else.

Holifield: I'm pretty sure there were four people there. Anyway, Mrs. Roosevelt came to the box during the performance.

Scobie: Had you ever met Mrs. Roosevelt before that time?

Holifield: No, I hadn't. Of course, I got up and greeted her, and she greeted all of us.

Scobie: Do you remember when she got ready to leave?

Holifield: Yes. She'd walked down from the White House, you see, and I got up and she was going to go out the alley door, the side door of the stage. We went down from the boxes, down some stairs, and out in the alley. There were lights there. The alley fronted on the main street right where the box office was. There was a little space between the two buildings. We walked to the front of the building, and I rather insisted on walking to the White House with her. "Oh," she said, "no, Congressman, you go back and enjoy the play. This police officer out in front will see that I get to the next officer, and he will see that I get to the next one." You could do that in Washington in those days. Yes, that was an amusing incident.

Scobie: Nobody had told you what to do with the president's wife?  
[Laughs]

Holifield: As far as I was concerned, if the president's wife wanted it that way, then it had to be that way. She wouldn't hear anything else. Then we went back and saw the show.



Scobie: I understand you have a good story about Helen.

Holifield: The only story that I know about Helen doesn't have anything to do with atomic energy. I don't mind telling you. She was on the floor arguing for an amendment to include the women workers in the telephone companies--the "hello girls," the answer girls. She offered an amendment to include them in the coverage of the labor act, you know.

Scobie: The Fair Labor Standards Act?

Holifield: Yes, something like that. She was making a very dynamic, enthusiastic speech--as I say, she was a very intense woman when she was an advocate on anything. She said, [mimicing a woman's voice]: "If my amendment isn't accepted, five hundred thousand women will be uncovered." The House just burst into a roar of laughter, you know. She looked around to see what they were laughing about. [Laughs] She meant that they would be uncovered in the legislation--and those mean men in the House, someone started the laugh and everybody caught on, that five hundred thousand women would be "uncovered," as though undressed. She just turned as red as a beet. Even with all of her experience, why, she could still blush when she got the impact of what she had said and the way the House had taken it. She just walked out of the well of the House and sat down, very much embarrassed. Be it said for the gallantry of the House that they passed her amendment, which was promptly taken out in conference, of course. [Laughter]

Scobie: I just want to cover one more area, and then we can stop. Did you get involved at all in her campaign of 1950?

Holifield: Just in my district. Why of course, I spoke for her. But I tried to get her not to run. I just told her that it was impossible for her to win the fight. Ickes had told her that if she came out for the 160-acre limitation, that she could ride into power on that. She asked me what I thought about it and I said, "I don't think that one man in ten knows anything about it. I don't think it's an issue that is appealing to the people in the cities. They don't know anything about it." I said, "If you'll have some experienced poll taker stand on the corners of the principal streets in Los Angeles and ask the people that come by, 'Would you answer a question? Do you know what the 160-acre limitation on acreage is?', in my opinion, there won't be one in twenty that will be able to answer you. I don't think it is an issue that is broad enough, along with all the other problems you would have. You're doing fine in the Congress. You're becoming very well informed on foreign affairs. I think you ought to stay in the House and not run for Senate."

Holifield: Well, she was very ambitious and naturally wanted to go up the ladder. But she did not have the broad base of appeal nor the broad issues that would enable her to win in a fight like that.

Scobie: Could you elaborate a little on that?

Holifield: Well, it's self-explanatory. She was ambitious to become a Senator, which is an honorable ambition. But she'd only been in the House three terms.

Scobie: So you don't think it was because she didn't like [Sheridan] Downey that she ran? You think there was more to it?

Holifield: Oh, she didn't like Downey because Ickes didn't like Downey. Downey had not come up to Ickes' expectation, in the 160-acre fight. He had played it cool, you know. He wasn't a strong advocate of the 160-acre limitation because he had to win the votes throughout California to be elected. He knew that he couldn't get anything but very strong opposition for coming out and making that an issue in his campaign.

Then, of course, she got into this very dirty fight with Nixon. That was when I already knew what Nixon was, because I had been in the Voorhis campaign. In fact, I was vice-chairman of the Twelfth Congressional District campaign for Jerry Voorhis in 1936.\*

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\* For the 1936 primary and general election there were four Assembly Districts in the Twelfth Congressional District. Each Assembly District had seven Democratic elected county committeemen. The congressman had the power to appoint three state committee persons in each Assembly District of his congressional district. The assemblyman was a county committeeman. The congressman was a state committeeman. Therefore with the four assemblymen and their twenty-eight elected county committeemen, there were a total of thirty-two. The one congressman, and his appointments (thirteen) gave forty-five persons in all. We formed these forty-five elected and appointed county and state committeemen into a campaign committee for the election of Jerry. We called it the Twelfth Congressional District Democratic State and County Committeemen's Association for the Election of our Congressional Nominee to Congress. Robert Burns, a Covina newspaper owner was the president and I was the vice-president. That was the first organized political "machine" that I know of, to elect a congressman in Southern California.



Holifield: I went through that whole fight for his first election.

I was a candidate in 1946 for reelection, and I happened to be on the South Pasadena High School stage in South Pasadena the night of the first of the seven debates between Nixon and Voorhis. After it was over we walked out in front of South Pasadena High School where they had the first debate. Jerry and I were close friends, and I'd worked hard for him in his campaigns before. Now I was a member of the House and had worked very closely with him back in Washington for four years.

At the last minute, Will Rogers, who was running for the Senate against [William] Knowland called me up and said that he had a big meeting in San Francisco that he'd been invited to address, and he thought he ought to go to and would I go out and take his place against Knowland. Evelle Younger's wife spoke for [William F.] Knowland, and I spoke for Will Rogers [Jr.]. Jerry and Nixon came on after the other candidates. After it was over, Jerry asked me what I thought about it. I said, "Jerry, he murdered you. He used every dirty trick in the book." He had his clique there--a big group of his followers--as was his custom, to cheer everything he said and boo everything that the other guy said. Jerry, of course, looked very hurt. He expected me to say that he'd done well. Well, he hadn't done well, because he fell into traps. Nixon got up and made a very simple statement that Voorhis was a "funny-money" man--his ideas on money were not held by any of the authorities, and if he went to Washington, he'd destroy the value of the dollar. "But I want to assure you if I go," said Nixon, "I will fight to preserve the dollar."

Then Jerry got up. In his limited time rebuttal--there were rules, you know some have five minutes for and five minutes against--he tried to explain his money system, which he'd written a book on.

It was things like that, and Nixon's innuendo and lies that he said about Jerry's voting with the Communist party. When Jerry tried to deny this, Nixon said, "Well, you voted with [Vito] Marcantonio. Mr. Voorhis says that he hasn't voted with the Communist party, but Marcantonio of New York is an avowed Communist, and he voted with him 365 times."

So Voorhis asked me, "What do you think I ought to do?" So I said, "I think you ought to cancel the other six debates." He looked at me and he said, "I couldn't do that, Chet. I agreed to debate seven nights." So he debated him seven nights, and the crowd got bigger and bigger. He got slaughtered every time because he wasn't a dirty fighter. He was a very fine Christian man.



- Scobie: Who did Helen look to for help in Congress? Who did she go to for advice?
- Holifield: Well, I really can't answer that. I know she respected Sam Rayburn, Speaker Rayburn.
- Scobie: Did she go to you to talk over her problems?
- Holifield: She talked over problems with me and Jerry Voorhis and George Outland when they were there.
- Scobie: Was she particularly close to Lyndon Johnson, do you remember?
- Holifield: I don't remember. I think she probably looked upon him as a friend.
- Scobie: Was her pattern of operation similar to other legislators, other congresspeople? My understanding is she really didn't have much to do with lobbyists. Did she really learn the ropes of the trade, know her way around?
- Holifield: Well, she was an intelligent woman. She was a hard worker. I think she would have made a very powerful woman if she had stayed on the Foreign Affairs Committee and obtained the seniority. She might even have been the chairman of it by now. When you're in Congress, you don't accomplish great things until you've been there quite awhile. It's like you don't get a Ph.D. by mail. You've got to work for it. Being a good congressman or congresswoman is just like being a good lawyer or a good doctor or any other profession. You have to learn it. You can't take a course and become an expert in political activity. There's so many things that are not written in the books, you know; it's not something you can teach. It's an art, it's not a science. It's the art of the possible, as has often been said. I've seen teachers of political science come to Congress, and they were as ineffective as if they had never opened a political science book. They were lacking in personal relations and the judgement of other people.

Teachers, you know, are teaching student minds which are on a less-informed level than their own. When you're in politics and you're dealing with fellow congressmen or senators, you're dealing with your equals. I've seen people with Ph.D.s come to Congress and fail miserably. I've seen other men come without any college education and become real experts in the art of negotiating and obtaining that which is possible. I've seen idealists kill themselves trying to get the hundred percent.

- Scobie: Where would you put Douglas in these terms you're describing right now?

Holifield: Well, she didn't stay there long enough to become a real expert. And she was too emotional. She was very excitable and vibrant and dynamic.

For example, she wouldn't have anything to do with the lobbyists. Well, my doors were always open to lobbyists. Two kinds of people come in to see you. The one that comes in to talk to you about something, about a political proposition that you're against, is a lobbyist. The one that comes in and talks the way you believe, is a public relations representative. And you can learn from both of them.

If I had the time, I never turned down a person who was against me. I had people who were against me that would like to come and see me and talk to me. They knew they couldn't influence me, because I wasn't influenced by them. But to be a real good "operator," if you want to call it that, in the field of legislation, you have to know your subject matter very well. You have to know how to talk to people and persuade them to your point of view. You can't crack a whip and drive them. You can't condescend and expect to have any influence.

You've got to meet people on their level and give them the right to their opinion and you the right to yours. Then you have to negotiate, and that's where the art comes in--negotiating with the other fellow to get him to do something you want him to do, to get him to support an amendment you want supported, or to get him to withdraw an amendment that he's going to offer before he offers it and commits himself.

Scobie: Where would you put Helen, again, talking within this framework?

Holifield: I wouldn't put her in a top position at all. She was too emotional, and she had very strong convictions. She would speak them out in such a way that it was a confrontation. It wasn't a philosophical discussion. I think she would have learned--I don't mean by that to say that she wasn't dedicated. She was just as dedicated as anyone I ever knew. But she had a long way to go in her relations with her fellow congressmen and congresswomen.

Scobie: I think that answers the questions that I had in my mind when I came here.

Holifield: Well, I've been very frank with you and I've given you straight answers, as far as my judgement goes, you know.

Scobie: Yes, and I appreciate that. An historian needs different sides to evaluate. And oral historians are trying to supplement the written record so as to provide more material for historical synthesis.

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remove commissioned members becomes even more serious when it is realized that terms of appointment are so staggered in the bill that in most cases the President would have to be elected for two successive terms before he would be in a position to appoint a majority of the Commission.

Here again, despite the breadth of powers granted the Commission, we find the Commission possessing an independence of the Chief Executive unmatched by any other executive department or agency. The bill should be amended to permit the removal of any member of the Commission whenever the President deems such action in the national interest, so as to insure that members of the Commission maintain a continuing responsibility to the President, to the Congress, and to the people, a responsibility which in this field is more important than that of any other part of the executive branch of the Government.

The pattern of independence spelled out in the bill is not yet complete. Not only is this all-powerful Commission to be on a part-time "catch as catch can" basis; not only is the Commission substantially independent of the President; but the principal full-time executive who will in fact, under this bill, direct the Nation's activities in the field of atomic energy, the Administrator is appointed by this very Commission without participation of either the President or the Congress. At a time when literally hundreds of Government executives hold positions of much less concern to the American public must be appointed by the President with congressional approval, it is inconceivable that the man whose authority is as broad as that of the Commission and who alone will devote full time to this most important development in our lifetime should be permitted to be appointed independent of the President, independent of the Congress, and by a group which itself is not required to meet standards on a par with the scope of their responsibilities. The bill should be amended to provide that the Administrator shall be appointed by the President with the consent of the Senate, and shall be removable at the pleasure of the President.

The provisions of the bill relating to people who are carrying perhaps the greatest responsibility of our times are of vital significance to every citizen of the United States. One more provision relating to personnel warrants equal concern. The American public first learned of the possibilities of atomic energy in shape of the atomic bomb. They are grateful for its effect in shortening the terrible period of destruction which has just ended. They are properly concerned over the future uses of atomic bombs and other military developments involving the release of atomic energy, but to consider the field of atomic energy as one of primarily military significance is to overlook totally the tremendous possibilities which it offers for improving the public welfare, increasing the standard of living, and generally easing the daily burdens of each of us. Scientists have testified that the harnessing of atomic energy for civilian purposes can produce a degree of human comfort the like of which the world has never seen or even imagined. While such developments are probably still some time off, some should be available in a few years and many others at a steadily increasing rate. In our opinion, the constructive possibilities of the use of atomic energy in our civilian life far exceeds the importance of atomic energy

## DISSENTING VIEWS OF MEMBERS OF THE MILITARY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE ON H. R. 4566

In our opinion, H. R. 4566 should be amended as follows:

1. The Commission should be composed of full-time, well-paid members.
2. Members of the Commission should be removable by the President whenever he deems it in the national interest.
3. The Administrator should be appointed by the President and serve at his pleasure.
4. The Administrator should be a civilian.
5. The Government should be the exclusive producer and owner of plutonium and such other fissionable materials as may be defined from time to time in regulations issued by the Commission.

The Commission appointed under this bill is given plenary control of the research, development, and utilization of atomic energy in the United States. To this end the Commission is given sweeping powers never before given in peacetime to any Commission.

The field of atomic energy according to all scientific testimony given is destined to have the greatest effect on both the domestic economy and military technique. Eminent scientists have testified that it is the most significant discovery since the discovery of fire.

While the breadth of powers granted may be necessary to meet a challenge of such great stature, it is wholly inconsistent with the scope of the responsibility that members of the Commission should be, as provided in the bill, on a part-time per diem basis. Devotion of only part time to the problems facing the Commission gives not only inadequate attention to these problems, but will also permit the possible maintenance of private interests by members of the Commission which may either conflict with or be divergent from the Commission's responsibilities. Furthermore the bill does not require the Commission to meet any more frequently than four times a year; by giving the Administrator almost as broad powers as the Commission, the infrequency of these meetings is further assured. Surely the Nation deserves to have the full-time services of high-caliber well-paid men to direct the development and application of this great power which will affect the destiny of every man, woman, and child in the United States, and possibly the world.

But this is not all. Members of the Commission once appointed are to a large extent free from responsibility to any President. The President's authority to remove members of the Commission is limited to certain specified causes which constitute a demonstrated dereliction of duty. Thus, although it may be desirable to replace a member of the Commission, either to attain the services of a highly desirable individual or to promote harmony within the Commission, this step cannot be taken without at the same time damaging the reputation of the man desired to be removed. This inability to

House REPORT NO 1186  
NOV. 5, 1945



be amended specifically to require that the Administrator of the Atomic Energy Commission be a civilian.

In addition to these provisions relating to the administration of our control over the development and use of atomic energy, there is one more major field in which we believe provisions of the bill to be seriously deficient.

The bill presently provides that the Commission is authorized to acquire materials from which atomic energy is derived and to license the production of such materials whenever it deems such action necessary. The bill furnishes no policy criteria by which the Commission can be guided in making these decisions. In the light of potential importance of atomic energy to our everyday activities and in view of the tremendous military potential of these materials, it would seem reasonable to consider these materials of greater value than money. While many Government functions of great importance are subcontracted to private firms, this country has not seen fit to permit any private firm to manufacture United States currency. In our opinion, the bill should be amended to require similar protection for the source materials from which atomic energy is derived. Specifically the Commission should be the exclusive producer and owner of plutonium and other fissionable materials and should be specifically prohibited from licensing any private concern to produce, refine, or process such materials except on a research basis.

CHET HOLIFIELD.  
MELVIN PRICE.

○

These remarks are from Atomic Energy  
Act of 1946, Senate and House Reports,  
House Hearings

These notes were handwritten by Holifield  
to accompany the document. (Some explanatory  
phrases have been added by the editor.)

House Report NO 1186 which  
accompanied H.R. 4566 to  
House Floor for Consideration  
of May-Johnson Bill.

Dated Nov. 5 - 1945

—#— on bill  
House Hearings, Here held

June 11, 12, and 26<sup>m</sup> / 1946  
(10 am. - 12 noon) by the Committee on Military Affairs.

H.R. 4566 was replaced by  
Senate Bill 1717 which<sup>185</sup>  
was accompanied by the  
Conference Report no. 2670  
filed July 25, 1946.

The final bill was passed  
with Conference approval  
(S. 1717) and became the  
Atomic Energy Act of 1946  
Commonly called  
the McMahon Act

The McMahon Act was  
revised to broaden its  
Research and Development  
of Peacetime Applications  
in 1951



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University of California  
Berkeley, California

Women in Politics Oral History Project

HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS PROJECT

Albert Cahn

HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS: THE LOBBY FOR CIVILIAN  
CONTROL OF ATOMIC ENERGY

An Interview Conducted by  
Ingrid Winther Scobie  
in 1978

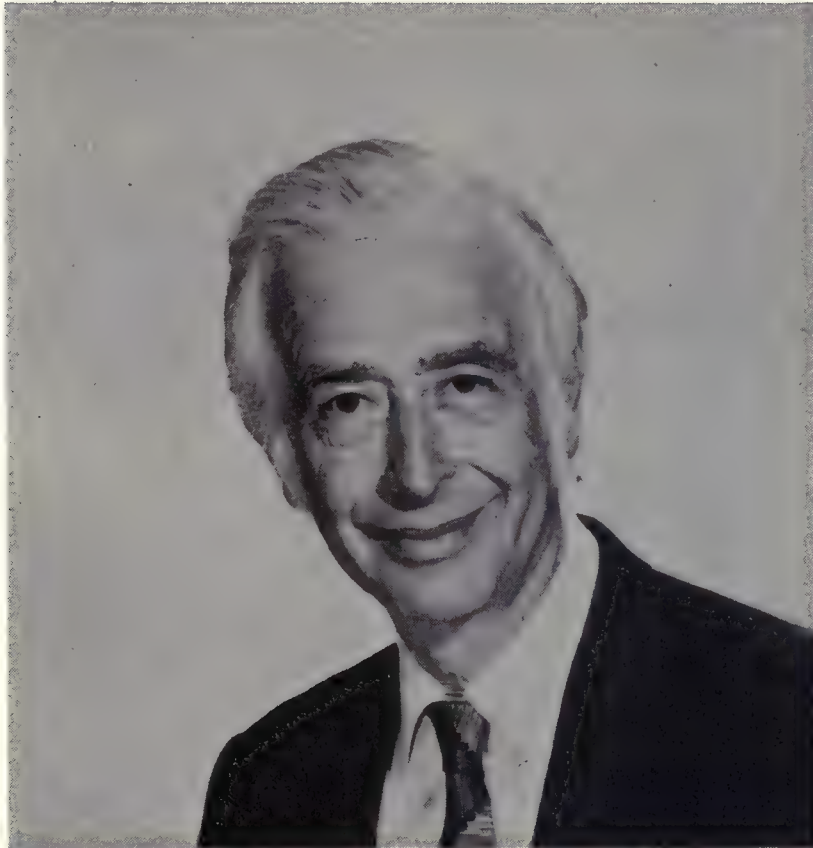
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ALBERT CAHN





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## INTERVIEW HISTORY

Dr. Albert S. Cahn was interviewed by the Regional Oral History Office for the Helen Gahagan Douglas unit of the California Women Political Leaders Oral History Project for two reasons: his work with Helen Douglas for civilian control of atomic energy immediately after World War II and the long-term close friendship he and his wife Margery have had with the Douglasses since 1945.

During the war, Cahn, a physicist, worked for the Metallurgical Laboratory at the University of Chicago, a critical link in the production of the atomic bomb. Immediately after the dropping of the bomb, Dr. Robert M. Hutchins, president of the University of Chicago, and known for his extraordinary dedication to the quality of American life, requested Cahn to go to Washington to form a lobby group to pressure Congress for civilian, rather than military control of atomic energy. Cahn's group, The Citizens Committee for Civilian Control of Atomic Energy, worked alongside the Federation of Atomic Scientists to adopt the McMahon Atomic Energy bill rather than the May-Johnson bill which pressed for military control. These groups worked closely with a hard-core congressional group supporting civilian control, including Helen Douglas and Chester E. Holifield. Cahn's interview gives significant insights not only into his own lobby's contribution but the Washington controversy over atomic energy control and more generally into the professional and personal character of Helen Douglas.

One is always appreciative of the energies and thought that interviewees give to the collection of oral history materials, but in the case of Albert Cahn, the interviewer feels a deep and special appreciation for his efforts. He had returned only the night before the interview from a long and tiring visit to Mayo Clinic. At the time of the interview he was not well, and yet he not only gave generously of himself but made the interviewer feel warmly welcomed upon this first contact. Cahn did not recover from his illness; he died August 8, 1978, five months after this interview. Mrs. Cahn, who generously arranged the interview initially, and whose own interview follows, carefully completed the review of this transcript.

It is easy to see why the Cahn and Douglas contact developed into a personal friendship. Both have incisive minds, a depth of character, a real interest in the critical values of society, a tendency to launch into new and



unusual endeavors, and a sense of humor, plus a warmth and compassion which radiates to those who have the privilege of being around them. As his wife wrote this interviewer on February 12, 1979, "He brought delight and humor and compassion to all whose paths he crossed."

Ingrid Scobie  
Interviewer-Editor

15 March 1978  
University of California at San Diego

VIII HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS: THE LOBBY FOR CIVILIAN CONTROL OF  
ATOMIC ENERGY

[Interview 1: March 21, 1978]

Working at the University of Chicago's Metallurgical Laboratory

Scobie: Could you begin by giving me a bit about your background up to 1945--your academic background and training, your specialty.

Albert Cahn: Mathematics and physics, although my degree [Ph.D.] was in meteorology. I was a graduate student at the University of Chicago when the war broke out. Then I went to work eventually for the Metallurgical Laboratory at the University of Chicago as a theoretical physicist.

Scobie: When did you begin work for the Metallurgical Laboratory?

A. Cahn: I believe it was in 1942 or maybe 1943. I had finished graduate school in 1941 and began teaching in the meteorology department. The meteorology department was teaching air corps cadets and the program apparently produced enough trainees in that field. When that project gradually tapered off, then I shifted over to the Met Lab. I believe we had faculty status. It hadn't been going too long, about a year.

Scobie: What was the focus of the Met Lab?

A. Cahn: They were essentially doing the theoretical work on the design of nuclear reactors.

Scobie: How did this tie in with the other bases, Los Alamos and Oak Ridge?

A. Cahn: Oak Ridge was one of the big experimental stations, but several methods of using reactors were being tried at different locations including the isotope separation, which was attempting to build

- A. Cahn: a bomb out of uranium-235, and the simpler plutonium project, which set up a nuclear reactor which transformed uranium into plutonium, allowing the two to be chemically separated. The theoretical work and some of the early experimental work on reactors was done at the University of Chicago. The first small-scale reactors were built there, before they built a larger one at Oak Ridge, Tennessee, and the still larger one at Hanford, Washington.
- Scobie: Norman Hilberry was apparently an active person at the University of Chicago Met Lab. Do you remember him?
- A. Cahn: Well, he could very well have been around. I don't remember what he did, but after all, the Metallurgical Laboratory had thousands of employees, all divided into sections, and somewhat on account of secrecy, separated from each other. I was in the theoretical physics section, and I didn't speak to the people in the chemistry section, and things like this.
- Scobie: Did you have any intercommunication between departments at any point?
- A. Cahn: Well, we did about politics, but never about the scientific work. They probably did on the real top level, but I was never up in that part.

### Establishing the Citizens Committee for Civilian Control of Atomic Energy

#### The Pendergast Connection

- Scobie: Now what all led up to your going to Washington towards the end of the war?
- A. Cahn: Very peculiar. I was quite friendly with Leo Szilard during the course of the work at Chicago. There was great consternation when [President Franklin D.] Roosevelt died. I can remember that [Arthur H.] Compton, at the time, is supposed to have grabbed a book to look up [President Harry S.] Truman's biography and said, "My God, he's not a college man!" [Laughter]

I was born and raised in Kansas City, Missouri, and I had been friendly with, and as a matter of fact had worked for Mr. [Thomas J.] Pendergast in Kansas City, and it turned out that of all the literally



A. Cahn: thousands of people at the University of Chicago, I was the only one with a close tie, who could get somebody in to see Mr. Truman right after he became president.

I mentioned this to Dr. Szilard and he and Walter Bartke, who at that time was, I think dean of physical sciences wanted to make a strenuous effort to try to keep the United States from dropping any bomb. They wanted to go see Mr. Truman. So through some of my connections in Kansas City, I arranged for them to have a meeting with Truman. Well, I thought with Mr. Truman, although they never did actually get to meet him. They were shunted off to see Secretary [James F.] Byrnes.

Scobie: Tell me about your contact with Mr. Pendergast. When did he get sent to the penitentiary?

A. Cahn: I believe in '36, because in that year I decided to go back to school and change my way of living from being a member of the local political gang. Although it was profitable from the point of view of making money, it didn't seem to me that it was quite the proper way to go. As I hadn't gone to college, I entered the University of Missouri at Kansas City.

Scobie: What was the nature of your political activity?

A. Cahn: Well, we lived in a hotel. I essentially just had charge of that hotel, to get out all the voters on election days. But meanwhile you would do favors for people all during the year. If anybody would get a parking ticket or have any kind of a problem, I would take care of it for them. In the meantime, we would see that on voting days everybody in the hotel got to the polls. We arranged for automobiles to take them if they were not well. We also made sure that the residents of the hotel voted Democratic.

Scobie: How did the machine pay you?

A. Cahn: Well, I wasn't really paid. I was allowed to have certain privileges that I could make money from. At that time, the community had slot machines. Although they were illegal, the law was not enforced against them. So I had a small district where I could put slot machines. I would collect roughly a hundred, hundred and fifty dollars a day from these.

Scobie: You had mentioned that you were able to arrange a meeting which turned out to be with Secretary [James] Byrnes. Now how did you go about arranging this?

A. Cahn: I called up an attorney by the name of Harry Schwimmer, who was active in the party. He got in touch with Mr. Tom Evans, who was the president of the Crown Drug Company in Kansas City, and a close intimate friend of Mr. Truman's. Mr. Evans spoke to Mr. Truman and said that there were some people at the University of Chicago who wanted to speak to him about a highly secret matter that they couldn't reveal at all, even what they wanted to talk to him about, but that they wanted to talk to him.

I was later told that Truman said to Mr. Evans, [mimics gruff tone] "I don't like it. I don't like it at all." But he did arrange for us to go see the appointments secretary, Matt [Matthew] Connolly. I think he got into some serious trouble too, later. The arrangement was made to see Dr. Connolly, who would then carry on. It was Mr. Connolly who told Dr. Szilard and Mr. Bartke that Mr. Truman had arranged for them to see Secretary Byrnes about this.

Scobie: Now who actually went to see Byrnes?

A. Cahn: Szilard and Bartke. But I went with the two of them to Washington, primarily just because I wanted to go, and they felt that it was worthwhile for me.

Scobie: That must have been interesting.

A. Cahn: Yes, it was. It was exciting.

Scobie: What came out of that meeting?

A. Cahn: Nothing, nothing. [Laughter] As you know, they dropped the bomb. But there was a lot of argument among scientists as to what was the right thing to do. Szilard, who I felt was the smartest of all people, felt that the one secret that we really had was the fact that we had a bomb that worked. He felt that the Japanese were trying to surrender at the time, and there was no need to drop the bomb. The military was working very hard to get it dropped, but the scientists felt that the military was doing this primarily as justification for the expenditure of two billion dollars. They didn't like or want to explain what happened to the money without anything to show for it.

But it's hard to tell whether life would have been better if the dropping of the bomb had not taken place.

Support from Robert M. Hutchins

Scobie: What led up to your going to Washington to set up an office to lobby for civilian control of atomic energy?

A. Cahn: Well, after the bomb was dropped, there was again great interest in the political situation and as to what would be done with atomic energy, with the future of the whole process, what the laws would be. I talked a lot again, primarily with Szilard but also with Mr. Hutchins, who was very much concerned. I felt that I would be helpful in Washington, because in addition to my Kansas City connections, Margery's family lived in Connecticut and knew Senator [James O'Brien] McMahon very well, as well as Congressman Abe [Abraham A.] Ribicoff. I felt that knowing these people and knowing several other congresspeople from Connecticut, that I could be helpful in Washington in getting the viewpoint of--at that time, we called it the Federation of American Scientists--before the proper people.

Scobie: Did you know Eugene Rabinowitch?

A. Cahn: Yes. Rabinowitch was the editor of the Bulletin [Science and Public Affairs: Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists]. He was a remarkably fine writer.

Scobie: So when you went to Washington, were you on University of Chicago faculty salary?

A. Cahn: No, I wasn't. I stopped being paid by the Met Lab, but Mr. Hutchins got me some money. I don't know where the funds came from. But he was essentially taking care of my expenses. I wasn't getting any salary, but he was paying my expenses, which were considerable at that time. Just to live in Washington and pay the telephone bills and things that were needed to lobby.

Scobie: Were there other universities around the nation that were as concerned as Chicago about a postwar plan for the proper development of atomic energy?

A. Cahn: All the universities that were involved in the Manhattan Project were interested in this. But I think that the only university that more or less officially as a university tried to do something about it was Chicago. I think this was primarily due to Mr. Hutchins, who was just putting a lot of the resources of the university into doing this. But there were people there from Columbia, M.I.T., Illinois, and other universities.



## Lobbying Activities

Scobie: I'd like to shift to your Washington operations. I've heard it termed "Washington office." How was it organized?

A. Cahn: Very loosely. [laughs] The Federation of American Scientists had an office--I've forgotten even the address. At the time I was there, Willy [William A.] Higinbotham was the Washington representative for the federation and a man named Joe Rush was also, I believe, a full-time worker. I'm not sure whether they were employees or just spending all their time there. Scientists were coming in and staying for a few days, then going back to work. The office would usually arrange for them to have interviews with various congressmen, senators, and influential people, to go talk to them and present their point of view.

But I didn't stay with the Federation of American Scientists. I helped set up what we called the Citizens Committee for Civilian Control of Atomic Energy. We had a separate office which I ran. The primary purpose was to do general lobbying, but also to do publicity campaigns, to raise some money for the lobbying. However we did work closely with the federation.

Scobie: Were those who worked with you all young scientists?

A. Cahn: No. I think I was the only scientist in our office. Rachel Bell was a very influential person. Mrs. Wayne Coy, Grace Coy, was involved. We got together a lot of people who were in the general stream of lobbying--labor leaders, the League of Women Voters, people who all had pipelines into Congress and were influential. We would attempt to use them in getting what we wanted. Plus we set up a big committee of fairly important people--Beardsley Rummell, Leon Henderson, Whitney--who was the man who used to run the advertising business? What was his name? I don't know.

Scobie: When you found somebody who you felt was sympathetic to your cause, would you go primarily to their office or invite them out socially?

A. Cahn: We would do both. We would invite them out socially, but primarily we would try to answer any questions that they would have to ask, supply them with the technical information needed. We had the scientists sort of "on call," and any questions that might be bothering them, we felt that we could answer them. We found this to be the most effective way of influencing them. I think they were taken by our sincerity, and that we were motivated by no ulterior motive. We had nothing to sponsor except what we felt was saving the life of humanity. I think that's why they took us seriously.

Scobie: Would you, at that time, indicate that you had worked at the Met Lab?

A. Cahn: Oh yes, yes.

Scobie: Did [J. Robert] Oppenheimer come towards the end and work with the Washington group?

A. Cahn: Yes. He was there all through it, although he was always kind of a lone wolf. He was primarily in the United Nations part of trying to set things up. He worked with a lawyer named [Herbert] Marks. He and Marks had a mutual admiration society.

Scobie: How did your wife's personal connections with the McMahons and the Ribicoffs fit into this picture?

A. Cahn: This essentially got me started. McMahon was very nice to me. At that time, he had two members on the staff of his senatorial committee, chiefly Jim [James R.] Newman and an attorney named Byron Miller and Edward Condon. Working with those three people, I met most of the other people, and got most of the political advice I needed. As a matter of fact, it was Jim Newman who introduced me to Helen.

Scobie: Can you recall when you first met her?

#### Helen Gahagan Douglas's Contribution

A. Cahn: Mrs. Cahn and I used to arrange dinner parties--private dinner parties, or various other ways of meeting people and would have maybe half a dozen congressmen and senators. We would try to have four or five scientists and we would try to get famous scientists like [Harold] Urey, Szilard, or Oppenheimer. Helen was at one of these dinners that we arranged.

Scobie: What was your reaction to her when you first met her?

A. Cahn: I was quite impressed by her.

Scobie: Why?

A. Cahn: She just seemed a capable person. Although, already by then her influence had faded somewhat, because she had been in well with the Roosevelt administration, and after Truman came in, Truman was in the process of getting rid of a lot of the old-time New Dealers.

- A. Cahn: I'm sure that she didn't have near the influence with the Truman administration that she did with Roosevelt. I don't mean that the Truman administration didn't like her, but it just wasn't the same close personal relationship for her. Truman sent support from Washington in 1950 so as to help elect another Democrat, another administration supporter.
- Scobie: What was the nature of the friendship between Helen and the Roosevelts?
- A. Cahn: Well, I just heard Evie [Evelyn] Chavoor and Helen talk about it. I know that they were close and that she was not infrequently at the White House. Mrs. [Eleanor] Roosevelt was very close to her and liked her. That personal relationship was just lacking with the Trumans, and again with any of the influential people of the Truman administration, as they got the New Deal people out.
- Scobie: Do you think that her relationship with the Roosevelts helped her rise so quickly in Congress?
- A. Cahn: Yes. She was an attractive woman, which at that time was always helpful, glamorous as an actress and singer.
- Scobie: What kind of influence do you think she had in the House?
- A. Cahn: Well, the House was then, perhaps even more than now, built on seniority. She obviously could not have had much influence in her first term or even her second, although perhaps a little more than a congressman of that amount of time would have had, had it not been for her friendship with the Roosevelts and the fact that she was somewhat a glamorous woman that the administration wanted to press forward at that time.
- Scobie: Did people take her seriously as a congresswoman?
- A. Cahn: Well, certain people did and certain other ones didn't. You know, at that time there were a lot of people who wouldn't take any woman seriously.
- Scobie: Do you think that was a factor in her losing her campaign in 1950 against Nixon?
- A. Cahn: No, no. I think it was just the times were changing. Nixon was unscrupulous and painted her as a Red. It scared a lot of people in this rather conservative state.
- Scobie: Do you remember which congressmen were the most influential for your position in atomic energy?



A. Cahn: Well, the congressmen that were the most help to us, I believe were Chet Holifield, and Helen, and Andy [Andrew J.] Biemiller--we saw a lot of him. There were five or six others including Ribicoff and McMahon that I think worked hard. Helen felt very deeply about it, made several speeches, worked hard. She and Holifield I think were the two main people in the House.

I think maybe because Holifield saw a career for himself in it, that he might have worked a little harder. I think he saw very early that he wanted to become an expert on atomic energy. I think he had decided at that time that he was going to stay in the House and make a career of being a congressman, because he had a very safe district and didn't have any senatorial ambition as Helen did, and felt that here was a new field starting up, and that by working hard, he would get on this committee [Joint Committee on Atomic Energy]. Well, he actually became head of it after awhile.

Scobie: Do you think that Helen had senatorial ambition, that early?

A. Cahn: I rather think so.

Scobie: Could you elaborate?

A. Cahn: No. I don't really know why; just my feeling.

Scobie: Would you have any insight as to why she was not appointed to the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy?

A. Cahn: No. As I say, I think she didn't try quite as hard as Chet did. I think again it was the House leadership that decided who was going to be on it. I'm sure that California was only entitled to one, to a small number. She was considered pretty far to the left at that time. I think it was the House leadership that kept her off.

I remember once during one of the hearings, Mr. [Bernard] Baruch was in town. We wanted him to testify that he wanted the McMahon bill. I think this was the May Committee that was holding the hearings. I was driving him around Washington, and I took him up to the Capitol, and I wanted to get him invited in there. I just walked into the committee room and went up to Clare [Boothe] Luce, who was on that committee, and said that Mr. Baruch was outside and would testify if they wanted him. She immediately got up and came outside and kissed him and took him back in. On account of that, May couldn't very well not have him testify. [Laughter]

I remember afterwards as we drove away, I said to Mr. Baruch, "Mrs. Luce kissed you. She's never kissed me." He said, "You don't have a million dollars." [Laughter]

Scobie: That's marvelous! I wonder why Helen didn't work on the UN [United Nations] committee on atomic energy [United Nations Atomic Energy Commission].

A. Cahn: I don't know, but I think already the forces that really run the country were beginning to take over. They wanted the people they wanted on it.

#### Support from the Press

Scobie: How would you evaluate your role in the passage of the McMahon bill?

A. Cahn: Well, there was an awful lot of effort by a lot of people. It's hard to say just which was the straw that broke the camel's back. I'm sure we were of influence. As to putting a relative weight on it, I wouldn't know how to do that. I'm sure had not all of the other people helped, had not Brien McMahon been as experienced in politics as he was, had not Jim Newman been as experienced with pulling strings and doing things, the bill would not have passed.

I think that people like Newman and McMahon pointed out to us the ways in which our groups could be most helpful. I think that we were helpful. I remember one time we put a full-page ad in the Washington Post that did have influence. I remember I was personally attacked from the floor of Congress for having put in what was termed "a slanderous ad" in the paper.

We got a lot of help from Alfred Friendly, too. He was a very close friend of mine. The press can be very influential and important and was at the time. Herblock [Herbert Block] did a number of cartoons that I think were helpful. Actually, he gave me one of them. I'll show it to you later. I think perhaps my influence with the press was as much as anybody's, again through some personal relationships. John Ochs from the New York Times at that time was in Washington as a Washington correspondent. I think these, the Post and the Times, have more influence in Congress than any other two papers. I think we got our view across to the press easier and with more constant point of view than we did directly with the congresspeople.

Scobie: And you would see them frequently?

A. Cahn: I would see them almost every day. Certain columnists, Leonard Lyons, for example, I became well acquainted with. We used to do silly things like go to New York to go to the Stork Club to

A. Cahn: meet Leonard Lyons in the Cub Room to tell him one little thing that he would put in his column. [Laughs] This would come back and have a lot of effect.

Yes, newspaper and magazine personnel helped us a lot. Helen Fuller was another helpful person. Helen Fuller, and Michael Straight. He owned the New Republic.

Margery Cahn: Somebody from the St. Louis Post-Dispatch was very helpful, too, at that point. I can remember a couple of newspapers we kept contacting, because the people were extraordinarily helpful.

A. Cahn: Was one Jean Lightfoot?

M. Cahn: Yes, I think so.

A. Cahn: The one with the sense of humor?

M. Cahn: Yes.

A. Cahn: Once she took a Tampax and says, "I've always wanted to do this," and she takes it and lights a match and lights the end of the string and throws it out the window and goes like this (covers her ears).  
[Laughter]

Scobie: Well, back to your general contribution.

A. Cahn: I would say overall that maybe ours was something like five percent of the effort. Again, who's to tell? You never know who motivates senators and congressmen.

Scobie: Do you feel that your group accomplished what it set out to accomplish?

A. Cahn: Superficially. In other words, the McMahon bill was passed and became the Atomic Energy Act. We did get the first commissioners that we wanted to. We particularly wanted [David E.] Lilienthal very badly. In actuality, I don't think that we accomplished anything, because the military took over with a nonchalance and aplomb that left me feeling so frustrated. We were out fighting and fighting, and we won the fight, but they had everything. Suddenly the same people all showed up as civilians who were running the show. It didn't make any difference.



The Years After Washington: Continued Friendship with  
Helen Gahagan Douglas

- Scobie: Your friendship with Helen, I gather, became a personal one which continued through the years?
- A. Cahn: Yes, yes. Actually, I guess it was when I came back in 1946 and went to work for the Bureau of Standards and couldn't find a place to live. She let me live in the basement of her house in Georgetown. I did that for several months. It was very nice of her.
- Scobie: Did your work with the Lobby Committee essentially end when the McMahon bill passed?
- A. Cahn: I think it was in '46 that I went to work at [The Institute for Advanced Study at] Princeton, just because I felt that things were kind of over in Washington, and I didn't want to make a career out of being a political lobbyist. I wanted to get back to scientific work. I worked for John Von Neumann on his computer project.
- Scobie: And how long were you there?
- A. Cahn: Only a few months. I couldn't find a place to live. Margery was in Hartford and I was in Princeton, and we were seeing each other on weekends. So I came down back to Washington, and just at that point Edward Condon had been appointed director of the Bureau of Standards. He appointed me a member of the mathematics staff there.
- Scobie: And how long were you with the bureau?
- A. Cahn: Well, I worked with the bureau in Washington until late in 1947, when we opened the field office here in Los Angeles at UCLA. I was transferred out here and continued with the bureau until either '54 or '55. I worked in private industry for a few months. Then I went to Copenhagen and worked at Niels Bohr's Institute for Theoretical Physics. I was there for two years. David Saxon was there at the same time I was there.
- Scobie: Is that right?
- A. Cahn: He and I were good friends. We're still good friends.
- Scobie: Through all these years, how did you keep in touch with Helen?

A. Cahn: Oh, Helen would call us whenever she'd come to town. When we'd go to New York, we'd call her. Then Evie moved back out here and lived out here for a while, and we used to see Evie quite a bit. Evie was the first person I ever met who ate--what's this sweet stuff with some kind of seeds in it? [Laughs] Halvah. Halvah for breakfast, spread on toast. [Laughter]

Scobie: Did you get any indication when you were in Washington as to how her office functioned, her congressional office?

A. Cahn: No, not really. I would usually see her at social affairs or at her home, although I'm sure I was in the office a lot. Evie ran the office.

Scobie: Do you have any other things you'd like to add about Helen?

A. Cahn: Well, she was an extremely warm and generous person. We got to know her out here, again before they moved back to New York, and they had the house up on Outpost [in Los Angeles]. When Margery and I first moved here, we called on her and Melvyn and the children. I always felt that it's rather been a shame that the country didn't make more use of her abilities. I mean, it's too bad, after she lost that one campaign, she didn't go on, either in politics or in the entertainment business. She apparently didn't feel that she wanted to go on singing.

Scobie: Did she ever talk about her decision not to go on?

A. Cahn: No, not to me, at least. And I didn't know too much about her relationship with the Gahagans. They apparently had a lot of money and a big company. I've always had the feeling that there were kind of interesting relationships there that I never knew that much about.

Scobie: How did Mel feel about her being a politician?

A. Cahn: I don't know, but I don't think he minded it at all. I remember once he produced Pins and Needles, and it came to Baltimore while we were all in Washington, and Helen took us all over to see the show. I think Melvyn was rather proud of her.

Scobie: Do you know Peter and Mary?

A. Cahn: I knew Mary. I didn't know Peter very well. I didn't know Mary that well. At the house up on Outpost, she was swimming all the time and was rather a big girl then.

Scobie: When you lived in Helen's basement, did you get much of an idea of how the household functioned?

A. Cahn: Not really. I was working and I tried not to bother them. I would just come in and they let me sleep there. Although I used to go up occasionally and have breakfast, usually with Evie. I remember once Helen was not feeling well. She was sick, and Lyndon Johnson, at that time a congressman, came over to see her and pay his respects and so forth. I felt that they were rather close. Again, I somewhat expected that he would give her a job when he became president, and was rather surprised that he didn't.

Scobie: Do you have any idea why?

A. Cahn: No, no. I don't know why Johnson reacted the way he did about anything. [Laughter]

Scobie: Did they see each other quite a bit when she was in Washington?

A. Cahn: I don't know. I only saw him that one time at the house. But Evie inferred to me once that they were friendly as congresspeople, you know. They were both New Dealers and had that relationship.

Scobie: Can you think of any other people that Evie or Helen commented on or you just picked up that she was close to in Congress, in addition to Johnson?

A. Cahn: No. Except that she was comfortable with all of the liberal wing.

Scobie: Did she work quite closely with Chet Holifield?

A. Cahn: Yes. I think she did. All the Democrats from California worked quite closely together. I think they had some organization that met once a month. I'm not sure. I remember she introduced me to John Sparkman once, who at that time was again still a congressman, before he had become a senator. I think they thought the same on a number of issues.

Scobie: Well, I think I have exhausted all my questions unless you have something to add. I certainly appreciate your time and thoughtful responses.

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HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS PROJECT

Margery Cahn

HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS: PERSONAL INSIGHTS  
INTO LIFE IN WASHINGTON FOR MEMBERS OF  
CONGRESS, LOBBYISTS, AND ADVISERS

An Interview Conducted by  
Ingrid Winther Scobie  
in 1978

Underwritten by grants from:

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MARGERY CAHN





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## INTERVIEW HISTORY

Date of Interview: March 21, 1978.

Place of Interview: The Cahn home, Los Angeles.

Those Present: Mr. Albert Cahn, Mrs. Margery Cahn, and the interviewer.

The Interview:

(Please see INTERVIEW HISTORY for Mr. Albert Cahn for additional information.)

Margery and Albert Cahn were both selected for interviews for the Helen Gahagan Douglas component of the California Women Political Leaders Oral History Project. Mr. Cahn knew Helen Douglas professionally through his work for civilian control of atomic energy in 1945-1946, and both Cahns then became and have remained her close personal friends.

The interview took place in a comfortable study towards the back of the lovely Cahn home. Afterwards the interviewer was invited for a delicious, simple family supper. The invitation was unusually cordial as Mr. Cahn had just returned from a long stay at Mayo Clinic. The evening offered not only an opportunity for relaxing conversation but also a chance to observe the gentle, warm, intelligent character of the Cahns. Despite the tiring events of the day, keen wit punctuated the evening's conversation throughout.

Both Cahns are very natural and unassuming people with wide-ranging interests, characteristics so noted of Helen Douglas. Margery Cahn's broad concerns and energies have, throughout the years, been concentrated both on her husband and children, her professional training and activities as an artist and art critic, politics and social problems, and in business development.

She received her B.A. from the University of Chicago after beginning college training at Antioch College. She continued graduate work in archeology at Chicago, and also worked and studied in the same period at the Oriental Institute. Although involved primarily with rearing two children after 1945, she did become actively involved with politics as a volunteer, particularly in the League of Women Voters both in Washington and in Los Angeles. She served on the Los Angeles City board for the league from the late 1940s until the mid-1970s. In addition Albert Cahn's work as a scientist took the family to Europe for lengthy stays. In the mid-1960s, Margery Cahn joined early efforts in Los Angeles to facilitate integration by helping found United Neighbors, which facilitated more harmonious race relations through women's groups.

Mrs. Cahn's long-standing interest, talent, and training in art has taken various directions. For example, as an artist she enjoys her own potter's studio; she has served on the Los Angeles Museum of Art's Graphic Arts Council since its inception; and she and her husband commissioned print makers both for their personal collection, for sale, and also for the Los Angeles Museum of Art. Her business talents have not only been directed into art, but also into such ventures as owner of an Idaho ski resort to which she frequently travels, and as a developer of a condominium community.

The death of Albert Cahn on August 7, 1978, ended a long, happy, and rich marriage. Margery Cahn willingly took on the editing task for both interviews and helped on final details--a difficult assignment and one most appreciated.

Ingrid Scobie  
Interviewer-Editor

8 August 1979  
University of California at San Diego  
San Diego, California

IX HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS: . PERSONAL INSIGHTS INTO LIFE IN  
WASHINGTON FOR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS, LOBBYISTS, AND ADVISERS

[This interview with Margery Stern Cahn immediately followed the one with Mr. Albert Cahn. Some casual conversation took place between the Cahns and the interviewer leading into the following interview with Mrs. Cahn. Relevant portions have been inserted in the Albert Cahn transcription.]

[Interview 1: March 21, 1978]

Washington in 1945: The Cahns' Contribution to Civilian Control of Atomic Energy

Scobie: Do you remember back when the friendships started between your family and the Ribicoffs and McMahons?

Margery Cahn: Oh yes, very easily, especially with Ribicoff. He was a younger member of the law firm [Abraham A. Bordon] that my family had used. So he was actually our lawyer before he became a congressman.

Scobie: What did your father do?

M. Cahn: My father was a businessman. He had a wholesale distributorship. He distributed Zenith radios, Columbia records, and other appliances in southern New England. So he was in the business community there for many years.

Scobie: And the McMahons?

M. Cahn: The McMahon connection is not quite as clear to me as to how I first knew them. But again, it was a friendship that was there through the family in some way.



Scobie: How did you go about reestablishing contact when you went to Washington?

M. Cahn: Well, with Ribicoff it was as easily done as calling him up and saying, "Hey, I'm here, and we would like to see you." I think it was the same thing with the McMahons. It would be as if I had come into town and was going to see two friends.

Scobie: Now [James O'Brien] McMahon was a freshman senator at that point.

M. Cahn: Right.

Scobie: Did he still have quite a bit of influence despite this?

M. Cahn: The Senate is a smaller club. Each man's voice is a little stronger than the representative's voice. And McMahon was a rather brash man. He didn't hesitate to push himself where he wanted to be.

Scobie: Did he and Helen have much contact before the atomic energy bill came up? Were they part of the same social group?

M. Cahn: I don't know if they knew each other beforehand, or whether there was anything beyond commonality of interests in the bill to hold them together.

Scobie: Were you in Washington for the entire duration of Mr. Cahn's stay?

M. Cahn: Yes. During the atomic energy days, we had a house on P Street in Washington, right in the middle of Georgetown. It was used very extensively for entertaining. We used to have dinner parties, gatherings, groups--people stayed overnight! You know, all kinds of things. Washington in those days was a very busy, busy place. It was directly after the war and everybody from everywhere seemed to descend on Washington. But I met more people there that I didn't know than I saw old friends.

Scobie: You had commented several days ago on the phone that people were so hopelessly uninformed about atomic energy. Do you remember your reaction to this?

M. Cahn: My own reaction was that the possibilities of its destruction were known but didn't seem to register intellectually with a lot of people. Its potential for damage was just so awesome. I just think that people didn't know what atomic energy could do. With the exception of thinking that it had ended the war and wasn't that great, they just weren't tuned in.

Scobie: Did you get involved in politicking as well as Mr. Cahn?

M. Cahn: Yes, to a limited degree. I had always been a member of the League of Women Voters and I suppose that that was one of the avenues that I felt most comfortable dealing with. My own scientific knowledge was certainly not very impressive. I could be an advocate, but not a knowledgeable, informed person as all of the scientists were.

Scobie: But you were certainly an informed citizen.

M. Cahn: I was an informed citizen, and I think you put it well. That was probably my major ability. But I was present in rather a secondary role in lots of the things that Mr. Cahn did.

Scobie: Do you have any recollection of some of the people that he worked with that were important in Congress?

M. Cahn: Well, I can remember Washington being very hot at night in the summer, in the evenings, and having lots of congressmen sitting around in the garden. I think that the people that he mentioned--McMahon, Helen, Ribicoff, Biemiller--I think I even remember Lyndon Johnson sitting on a barrel in the back yard.

There were a group of advocates who were young and interested, and certainly Holifield was one of them. But I don't have any specific details now.

Scobie: Was the emphasis of Mr. Cahn's group [Citizens Committee for Civilian Control of Atomic Energy] specifically on Congress or was it really on everyone--Congress, the executive, the press, the UN?

M. Cahn: That's hard for me to say. I had a feeling that the Congress was a prime target. And the press cooperated in ways of urging votes and trying to arouse the citizenry around the country to their responsibilities. There was an attempt really on behalf of many people at that time to just make anybody aware of what was happening, and to have it bounce both ways, to have it reflect to their congressmen as well as talking to their congressman directly.

Scobie: Were there other lobby groups besides Mr. Cahn's and the Federation of American Scientists that were mentioned in the field of atomic energy?

M. Cahn: Not that I recall now, no. I think these two groups were the prime movers. And when some senator's vote would be in doubt, they would find some scientist from his district, from a university

M. Cahn: where he was from and try to get him to come in and speak to that man. So they were always flying someone in. That was really the atomic scientists' group that did that, more than anything else.

Scobie: Now where did the Committee for Civilian Control get its money?

M. Cahn: By dribbles and drabbles and begging--and it just seemed to turn up when it was needed. It came from all over. It came from people who would solicit it on their behalf. There was a lot of union support at that time. But there were also groups of people in cities. I don't think that foundations per se as we know them now would give great amounts of money. I don't think there were great amounts of money, but it would be something like enough money for another mailing, and enough money to pay the telephone bill, and enough money for the rent, and that kind of thing. So we aren't talking of vast sums.

Scobie: But all this time Mr. Cahn was supported by [Robert M.] Hutchins and his private fund.

M. Cahn: Some fund, yes. I recall he paid the rent on our house as well.

Scobie: Why did he have a particular interest?

M. Cahn: Well, I think that the University of Chicago at that time had a rather moral, ethical outlook on life. It was the Hutchins and [Mortimer J.] Adler period. The activity centered around the university itself, of this group of scientists developing the first atomic pile on their grounds, right there at the university, under the stands of the athletic field. I think it must have had an impact on everybody that was around there.

Scobie: So it was common knowledge that something was going on?

M. Cahn: No. I can't say it was common knowledge, because I didn't know what was going on.

Scobie: You didn't?

M. Cahn: No.

Scobie: How did that feel?

M. Cahn: I knew that there were some very bright and important people who were working on something, and I knew that the wives of this group and the men of the group preferred to segregate themselves socially, over a period of years. I suppose I knew some inkling of what was



M. Cahn: going on, just because I knew what all these people had done before, but I really didn't know whether success or failure was at hand. I didn't know what they were really doing.

Scobie: You didn't know that they were working on something so destructive.

M. Cahn: That's right.

Scobie: Did Mr. Cahn?

M. Cahn: Yes.

Scobie: Did all the scientists at the Met Lab know what they were working towards?

M. Cahn: I believe so.

Helen Gahagan Douglas: Politician, Mother, Wife

Scobie: I'd like to talk to you about Helen generally, as a person. Do you have any recollections about how the family functioned, how she was as a mother, and how she viewed the combination of her roles as a mother, wife, and professional?

M. Cahn: During the Washington days, I think she functioned pretty much in an isolated way. Mary Helen was not with her; she was away at school somewhere at that point. Peter too was never there, that I recall. I recall having met Mary Helen on occasion, but very occasionally. The boy I never saw. Melvyn I saw very rarely. Not even occasionally, rarely. But Helen left and would go to California while I'd be in Washington.

Scobie: So she saw Mel and the children some?

M. Cahn: Yes. I know that their home was in Los Angeles, in Outpost at that point still. She considered that home.

Scobie: When you say that she operated in isolation, do you mean from her family?

M. Cahn: From her family.

Scobie: How do you think that affected her feelings about her role as a mother?

M. Cahn: I think she was very conscious of Mary Helen at that point, because she was having some learning difficulties. She was in some special school of some kind, as I recall now. I think she was very conscious and torn that she was one place and that her family was another. But Washington was awfully exciting, and it would be awfully hard to not let that experience transcend the other, dominate it at that stage. Because after the war, Washington was really the focus of just so much activity.

Scobie: Who manned the California end, then, Mel?

M. Cahn: I think Melvyn was there. You know, Evie Chavoor had started out as--well, I don't think you'd call her a nursemaid, but as a housekeeper. There was always discussion about the house in California, about the people and so on. But Helen had been on the stage, she had been away, she had been a career person for many years. I think that this wasn't a new adjustment for her. In other words, their lives had not been one of total domesticity ever. So I don't think this was a particularly vexing problem for her. At least I didn't see it as such. But who knows what's in someone else's mind.

Scobie: But it wasn't something that dominated her conversation.

M. Cahn: No, not at all.

Scobie: When you saw her socially, what kind of things did you talk about?

M. Cahn: Well, Washington socially is not the same as other places socially! Washington society is a political society a great deal of the time. I would say that we were rather consumed by atomic energy at that point, but there would be other conversation as well, of course. It's a society that works on what's happening today. The dinner table conversation is about the news of the day. I think that was more or less what we spoke about.

Scobie: And wives who were interested were as much involved.

M. Cahn: Yes. Living in Georgetown, I had a few old friends who were there. But I never was as comfortable in Washington as I have been in other cities. Never.

Scobie: Why?

M. Cahn: I've never been able to analyze it. I think it's because at that point I thought it was not receptive to people who were not important to someone else. I think that's probably the major thing. It was and is a city of makers and shakers. It had a

- M. Cahn: disdain for--not even a disdain, that's too strong a word. It didn't have particularly an intellectual bent at that period. I had come from a university community, and Washington seemed rather at odds with it.
- Scobie: How often did you see Helen once you came out here to Los Angeles?
- M. Cahn: Let's see. We were here during her campaign against Nixon. That was in 1950.
- Scobie: Were you involved in that campaign at all?
- M. Cahn: Yes, we were involved in the campaign here.
- Scobie: In what way?
- M. Cahn: I was working in campaign headquarters, in lick-the-postage-stamp kind of fashion. Just as a volunteer, not as anything else. But with Evie and some of the other people who were around, I was helping them out.
- Scobie: Was Evie involved at the time to a great extent in the campaign?
- M. Cahn: Always, always. Evie really became a very efficient person around her office. She'd run her office in Washington. As I recall it at that particular time, it was the rise of the Democratic clubs in California. I think that the Democratic organization in California had not had a "grass roots movement" much before then. The Democratic club system came into being and I became involved out here with that, as well as trying to do what I could, you know.
- Scobie: You said that you were with the League of Women Voters before you went to Washington. Were you active with the league in Washington?
- M. Cahn: Only in the sense of contacting them to turn them out to go on the Hill to do their thing. But I didn't go to the unit meetings or do any of the day-by-day league activities as I had done previously and have done since.
- Scobie: Since 1950, have you seen her frequently?
- M. Cahn: Well, I think that probably Albert answered the question.\* Whenever we've been in New York, we've seen her or called her, and whenever she's been here--many times that she's been here--

---

\*Mrs. Cahn was quietly present at the interview with her husband.



M. Cahn: we've seen her and we've seen Melvyn, and we've been in their house and they've been in our house. It's been just a long, easy, special relationship.

Scobie: They're special people.

M. Cahn: Yes. I feel badly that she's not well now.

Scobie: Have you been in touch with her lately?

M. Cahn: Not since before Christmas. We've been so kind of wrapped up in our own problems.

Scobie: Are there any particular moments that you recall, incidents that were very special to you that you feel illustrate the kind of friendship you had?

M. Cahn: Oh, I can remember being in her house in Washington and watching her dress and deciding what she should wear for some speech on the floor of Congress. [Laughs] Clare Boothe Luce always had a rose, and I said to her, "Can't we get a flower?" [Laughs]

My husband did not mention it, but I always thought there was some kind of a sense of awareness between Clare Boothe Luce and Helen. I had felt that there was a sense of two attractive women in Congress at that point. I always felt that there was just some kind of consciousness of one another's actions all the time.

Scobie: It would be natural. What about Mary Norton? Did she figure in that?

M. Cahn: Not that I recall.

Scobie: So she was conscious of how she looked?

M. Cahn: Always, yes. She really carried around her an aura of glamour that couldn't really be denied by anybody that saw her. She was a very attractive woman, enough so that I was kind of in awe of her, you know. I guess I had a one-year-old and Mary Helen was sixteen, or something like that, you know. It was a difference. She was really my parents' generation and not mine.

Scobie: Do you think that she thought of using her glamorous presence in terms of feminine persuasiveness?

M. Cahn: I think she was on stage a great deal of the time. I really think she knew how to use her body, to use her face, to use her whole "get-up" to make her point.

Scobie: No one denied that? [Laughs]

M. Cahn: No. After she left Congress, she did a great deal of lecturing all around the country. She was always on lecture tours and on college campuses. I think she turned toward youth programs more than she had previously. I think even then she was quite aware of her appearance. I think it was important to Helen the way she looked. I still think it is.

Scobie: Do you have any thoughts as to why she didn't go on in politics when she moved to New York, or continue acting or singing?

M. Cahn: I never asked her, so anything that I think would be, you know, really just personal. I would presume it was because she didn't have a political base there. I think she would have liked to have stayed in Congress longer.

Scobie: Why do you think she came to New York instead of staying in California?

M. Cahn: I think it was the Gahagan Dredging Company that brought her to New York! She had some business connections there, as I recall it. Doesn't she?

Scobie: In fact, I think she worked as the vice-president for some time with the family?

M. Cahn: Yes, she was with the family business which was, as I recall, the Gahagan Dredging Company. They were either in New York or New Jersey, and I know they were operating in Florida a great deal.

Scobie: And in South America.

M. Cahn: Yes. But I really thought that it was business more than anything else that brought her to New York. I don't know what Melvyn's role in that decision was either. I just know that they went.

Scobie: Much to your dismay, I'm sure.

M. Cahn: Yes, right.

Scobie: Well, you have certainly offered important insights, but unless something else has come to your mind, we might close for today.

M. Cahn: No, it really doesn't.

Scobie: Fine. And thank you so much.

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Women in Politics Oral History Project

HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS PROJECT

Evelyn Chavoor

TWENTY-FOUR-HOUR-A-DAY SUPPORT PERSON

An Interview Conducted by  
Fern Ingersoll  
1976-1977

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EVELYN CHAVOOR





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## INTERVIEW HISTORY

As office manager and housemate of Helen Gahagan Douglas during her congressional years, vivacious, dark-eyed Evelyn Chavoor was probably her closest associate. Mrs. Douglas relied on "Evie" to look after her children for a number of years before she ventured to run for Congress. When the first campaign was successful, the two women went to Washington together to set up a household and office, and within a short period of time, Evie Chavoor was relied on to run the congressional office as she had been relied on to run many details of the Douglasses' California home.

The friendship and interdependence of the two women never diminished through the years. During the months that Evie and I talked about her relationship with Mrs. Douglas and especially about the congressional years, Mrs. Douglas was very ill with cancer and Evie was traveling to New York on many weekends to be with her. On a few occasions our Sunday afternoon interviews were interrupted by a call from Helen often asking Evie if she could visit the following weekend, and more often than not Evie went.

After an initial planning session, our five interviews took place on November 28, 1976, January 23, 1977, February 6, 13, and 20, 1977 in Evie's apartment in northwest Washington, D.C. On every wall there are memories of Helen: a colorful landscape which Helen Douglas herself painted, a photograph, a picture full of dancing motion which Evie once selected from two Helen offered her upon her return from a trip. On the back of one of the paintings was written the following:

"Sunset" Painted by Helen Gahagan Douglas at the home of Helen Fuller, autumn, 1961--and presented to Evelyn Chavoor by Helen Fuller in June 1963, in loving sacrifice to her loving appreciation of this painting and the painter.

Washington, Va.

Helen Fuller

The Bridge Bums, friends and colleagues who relaxed over a Saturday night bridge table with Helen Douglas during her congressional years, still met for bridge and conversation, often in Evie's apartment, during the period I interviewed her. Evie sometimes checked a name or date with them. At her suggestion I interviewed several people who had known Helen while she was in the House and who are still in Washington. Sometimes I used their remarks to stimulate her memory. Once a memory was recalled, Evie relived with intensity the stories she recounted.

On our first meeting, Evie brought out a large cardboard box filled with campaign material, special issues of the Congressional Record from dates when Helen had made important speeches, newspaper clippings, and a few copies of letters. In the box was also a copy of the famous Blue Book which was prepared for those who worked for Helen Gahagan Douglas's election to the Senate in 1950. I arranged these papers by topic and proceeded to use them along with other materials as the basis of interview outlines. These other materials included notes on news articles in the San Francisco Examiner on the Douglas-Nixon senatorial campaign, questions prepared by the Regional Oral History Office and asked of other people who had been close to Helen Douglas, and questions--for Evie herself--that the Regional Oral History Office had been asking more generally for their Women in Politics project. I read the Regional Oral History Office interview with Helen Douglas that centered on the running of her congressional office and the interview that the University of Indiana had done with Evelyn Chavoor for their Melvyn Douglas project.

Over three years went by between the time our interviews were finished and the time Evie was able to return the edited interviews to me. These were very difficult years for her: she underwent major surgery, friends from Helen Gahagan Douglas's congressional years became very ill and died, and finally Helen Douglas died just two weeks before Evie called me to say she had almost finished going over the transcript and filling in parts in response to my questions for clarification.

When she had finished going over the transcript Evie said, "I wondered as I went over all of this why I didn't remember particular legislation that Helen worked for or against. After all, I was there. But then I realized that I was pretty busy seeing that there was enough mucilage." Though consciously, Evie only meant to explain that she had been involved with the multitudinous details of running an office, on some level of consciousness I think she must have chosen the mucilage example rather than perhaps pencils because it was she who kept many people and plans from becoming unstuck.

Fern S. Ingersoll  
Interviewer-Editor

24 September 1980  
Washington, D.C.

## X TWENTY-FOUR-HOUR-A-DAY SUPPORT PERSON

[Interview 1: November 28, 1976]

[begin tape 1, side A]

Background of the Helen Douglas-Evelyn Chavoor Relationship

## Evelyn Chavoor's Family

Ingersoll: Let me just ask you a few questions about you, yourself, to start with. You're a native Californian, aren't you?

Chavoor: Yes, I was born in Los Angeles. You want to know my birthday; I don't care. December 6, 1917, it doesn't bother me one bit. I'll be fifty-nine years old next week, and it's a good age to be. I can't change that. I can't hide it.

Ingersoll: Before we started the taping you told me a little bit about your family which sounded very, very interesting. Could you tell me some more about that, where your parents came from?

Chavoor: Well, my parents were born in Turkey. I'm an Assyrian. Assyria is no longer on the map, but it was an ancient empire of Western Asia. Anyway, that's my background. My parents' background. My father came to the United States when he was relatively young and went to Worcester, Massachusetts where there was and is a colony of Assyrians. He later moved to Los Angeles. My mother came to the United States subsequently. She was met at Ellis Island by relatives and immediately put on a train for California where her brothers and sisters were. She lived with a brother and his family. Later, my father and she were married; it was an arranged marriage, as was the custom in those days. My mother told the story about how after the ceremony they and the guests walked down Griffith Avenue with candles flaring. They didn't have any automobiles.

Ingersoll: It had been fixed before they came to the United States?



Chavoor: No, in Los Angeles. Everybody knew everyone--all the Assyrians, that is--who came from Harpoort, Turkey.

We never knew my mother's and father's actual birthdays. We had to fix the dates at some point. It was always on the basis of, well, when so-and-so was born, somebody else was so many years old and it was this year. And I think my mother picked the date some time in July, July 4, or July 7. We had to make up dates because they had no records.

Ingersoll: Was it your brothers and your sisters who were interested in having dates for birthdays?

Chavoor: We had to do something subsequently for insurance purposes for my parents, and then for Social Security purposes. When I recently went through my security clearance I had to call my brother and say, "Hey, what dates have we been using?" [Laughter] Well, anyway, that's my background, my parents.

Ingersoll: What religion were they?

Chavoor: The Assyrian religion is High Episcopalian. Or, I'll tell you what, it's more like the Greek Orthodox. There was no church in Los Angeles so when the prelate of the Assyrian church came one year many years ago, the services were held in an Episcopal church.

Ingersoll: What kind of educational background did they have?

Chavoor: I think my father went to school, I don't know, to sixth grade, eighth grade. He worked.

Ingersoll: From a very early age then.

Chavoor: Yes. He was interested in sports, fighting. He thought he was going to be a pugilist at one time, I guess. But they came from a very poor background, my family, and they did very well once they got here. My mother used to work in a laundry for seven dollars a week when she first went to Los Angeles.

Ingersoll: Then they did a variety of things when they first came to the country?

Chavoor: My father worked in the factories, the foundries, or whatever they were, in Worcester at the time. But then he had family in Los Angeles, and that's where he went. They all got into the produce business--all fruits and vegetables--and many of them became growers.

Ingersoll: Your father sold vegetables and fruit, and that sort of thing?

- Chavoor: Yes. If you want to get right down to it, you could say he was a fruit peddler.
- Ingersoll: Did either your mother or your father have any particular interest in political activities, or cultural activities or civic activities?
- Chavoor: No. Primarily, my father was interested in the Assyrians and their background, and their history, and in trying to get an association together like the Italians do, the Germans and so forth. He was a charter member of the Assyrian-American Benevolent Association. My father became very much interested after I started working for the Douglasses and got involved in Helen's campaign. He was something else again. We had a sign--we had a great big two-story house at one time--and all across, "Helen Gahagan Douglas for U.S. Senator." The whole neighborhood was aware of it. He was terrific.
- Ingersoll: And don't I remember that you told me last week when we were talking about it that he gave gas coupons during the time when they were so precious, so that she could get about the district for her campaign?
- Chavoor: Yes.
- Ingersoll: So he really developed an interest in this sort of thing through you, didn't he?
- Chavoor: I suppose it was latent; he was always involved in something. He was always giving people advice. But my mother, of course, led a very sheltered life. When I look back on it I don't think it was quite fair. My mother learned to speak English but not very well.
- Ingersoll: It was a whole Assyrian community, then?
- Chavoor: That's right. These were the only people they associated with.
- Ingersoll: They could communicate very well--
- Chavoor: They spoke Armenian with them. Now that I think of it, my mother's brothers would be there--my uncles, would be in the house. We always had extra people. My mother was always cooking and cleaning.
- Ingersoll: Keeping the whole thing running.
- Chavoor: Yes.
- Ingersoll: And yet, not being able to get out of that rather, probably small world.
- Chavoor: Never did. A tragedy.

Ingersoll: Was she happy, do you think?

Chavoor: I have to presume that she was happy, maybe when she was younger, when she was first married. I don't know if she was very happy about it later on.

Ingersoll: How large a family did you have?

Chavoor: I have one brother and one sister. I had another brother who died a few days after he was born, and that was because when we were living on a farm in Fresno, my mother, while she was pregnant, was up there gathering the fruits from the trees.

Ingersoll: She was part of your father's business?

Chavoor: Well, in Fresno they had a farm. My grandparents--my father's father and mother--lived with us constantly. In one house in Los Angeles, I shared a room with my sister and my mother, because my grandparents had one bedroom, and my brother and my father had the other bedroom.

Ingersoll: It was an extended family.

Chavoor: Yes. But then at one time, when I was an infant, they moved to Fresno to a farm, on the basis that maybe they could do something with it--earn a livelihood. As I say, I was just an infant, I was born in Los Angeles. I think we were on the farm until I was about four or five years old. My father didn't want his parents to go with them at the time. He suggested, "Why don't you wait until I go and see what happens?" But they were there.

Ingersoll: Tell me something about the style of life in your family. I think you mentioned before that it was very patriarchal.

Chavoor: Yes. I think it was true of most of the families. I never dated.

Ingersoll: Never at all?

Chavoor: Never. A date? God, I never wore lipstick. I wore my dresses below my knee.

Ingersoll: Pretty much went to school, came home from school, were part of the family.

Chavoor: Yes. I think of my mother and me on Saturday, for instance. The Assyrians are great lamb eaters, and my mother would go on Saturdays and buy half of a lamb, and then she would come home and while she was gone--my aunt and she would go to do their shopping--I would have the house cleaned, the kitchen floor scrubbed. I would have every-



Chavoor: thing all finished. She would come home and prepare the meat. Now you take half of a lamb, what do you do with it? She would take the leg, bone it, remove all the fat and sinews, and prepare the meat which had to be ground three times in order to be mixed with what we call in this day and age, cracked wheat, but which we called bulghour. She would make stuffed meat balls and she would use the leg for that. She would use part of the meat to wrap in grape leaves. And this was all we had. We had different forms of lamb, with different tastes because she would mix it with different things, but that was the ritual.

And then we would bake bread--the great big flat bread. My mother would prepare the dough, using a whole twenty-five pound sack of flour. She would do the initial kneading, with all the ingredients that had to go into it, and then she'd put it in a great big galvanized tub; then she'd put a sheet over it, and I would knead this with my feet. [Laughs] She would get up at the crack of dawn, and she would prepare the dough which had stayed overnight. First, she would divide the dough into balls. She would then roll out each ball until it was a round, flat, thin sheet about twenty-four inches in circumference. Then she'd awaken me. And from the time I was awakened until it was time to go to school, I would be baking the bread. In a way, I look back on it now and wish I could do all those things.

Ingersoll: Things that you once knew how to do?

Chavoor: Yes. I knew how to bake the bread, but I never knew the essential start for it; and I can't make the stuffed meat balls, and I love them. I never learned, because I thought my mother was going to be there forever, I guess. Of course, at that time I wanted to be like the other kids, more American, and to have something other than lamb.

I worked in the cafeteria in grammar school, and macaroni and cheese--God, every time there was macaroni and cheese on the menu that's what I had. I would come home and say, "Why can't we have macaroni and cheese or a plain hamburger?" And, of course, later on as we grew older there were a lot of things we wanted in terms of different kinds of American food, and now I would give my eyeteeth to be able to make all the other things. That's my background.

Ingersoll: What things did your family expect of you, do you think? Did your mother think she would like to have you the same kind of person she was?

Chavoor: I think my mother wanted me to be married, have a home and children. I know that was what she wanted. She thought I ought to know how to sew, how to cook--I'm a pretty good cook; I can't cook the things she did. As far as my mother was concerned (maybe I'm doing her an

Chavoor: injustice) I don't think she thought I was a great success. She did in a sense because she knew I did a lot of things, but they weren't the things that she thought were important.

Ingersoll: And your father?

Chavoor: My father was different.

Ingersoll: What were his expectations for you, and perhaps for your brother, too?

Chavoor: He wanted my brother to be a lawyer, because he wanted him to make money. He didn't want him to be a fruit peddler like he was. And my brother when he graduated from UCLA [University of California at Los Angeles] started in law school at USC [University of Southern California], and he had the best of all possible worlds at that time because he had a clerkship when he was a first-year law student with the law firm then in Los Angeles, and it still may be, of O'Melveny & Meyers. That's because the O'Melvenys were one of my father's customers, plus the fact that Caddy Works, one of the UCLA athletic staff, was one of the partners with O'Melveny & Meyers. But my brother, after his first year, or maybe it was his first half-year, came home one day and said, "Law school is not for me." I think that broke my father's heart. Then my brother went into education, at which he was excellent.

Ingersoll: Has he taught through the years?

Chavoor: Yes, he taught, and he's been an administrator, and has been rewarded--both from the satisfaction that he's gotten from it, but also the respect and admiration and love that he's gotten from the parents and the faculty and students. Well, when he retired (he had to retire because of heart fibrillations), graduation night of the last class that he was involved with, they tore the roof down. So that was rewarding.

When my father died, I came home for the funeral from Tampa, Florida where I was. A number of our relatives were there naturally, and some of them had not seen Sherman for some time. And I remember this so vividly, the question was asked, "Well, Sherman, how are you? How are things?" and so forth. "Well, things are just fine," he said. "I'm satisfied, I have a good life, I don't have a lot of money, but I have enough, and I enjoy what I'm doing." Well, I thought, that's terrific.

My father was proud of him. My brother, in addition to being an excellent student, was (in that day and age) a tremendous football player.



Ingersoll: That would be important.

Chavoor: As a matter of fact, when he finished his graduate work at the University of Southern California--and this was in the thirties, in the mid to late thirties when we were still in a Depression economy--I remember there were three or four job openings, and Sherman got one of them. It was at Burbank High School where he finished as principal. At that time, they needed a football coach and a math instructor. His minor was math, and he was a star football player, so there you go. [Laughs]

Ingersoll: They couldn't have gotten anybody better. What about your father's expectations for you? You said they were different perhaps from your mother's.

Chavoor: Well, my father was out in the business world. My father spoke fluent English, and he got involved and was interested in what was happening in the community, the nation, and he wanted me to finish college. When Helen was elected, and all the years I worked for her, and with her, he understood maybe, and was happy. I think maybe I measured up to my father's expectations more than I did to my mother's. I'm sure he probably wanted me to run for office, or what have you. He had grandiose ideas.

Ingersoll: Did he ever say this sort of thing?

Chavoor: No. But, of course, when Helen ran for the Senate that was the only thing we heard about. He just wanted her to win.

Ingersoll: You were saying that he had the banners across the top of the house, and he'd given her the gas coupons, and that sort of thing.

Chavoor: Well, that was in 1950 when we had the banner across the house. He owned a building in Burbank, and he had a banner up there, too. Everywhere he went he was sounding off about Helen. In '44, in Helen's first election, when she ran for Congress for the first time, we were still at war--the war didn't end until '45 sometime. And we still had gasoline rationing. My father had a truck for use in his business and he was allocated a certain amount of gas coupons. He didn't use all of them, so he gave them to me. We wouldn't have had enough coupons for the use of Helen's car for the campaign without those that he gave us. I don't know what we would have done otherwise; to tell you the truth, it never occurred to me. We had a certain amount, but not as much as we needed, or what we thought was needed. Yes, he was all gung-ho. [Laughs]

Ingersoll: You said you thought your father would have liked it if you had run for elective office.



Chavoor: Only because he--he never said it--but he just thought that I was so terrific that I could do anything and everything. I've just imagined from that what he would have liked.

Ingersoll: Great to have a father like that.

Chavoor: Yes, he was quite a guy.

### Early Work in the Douglas Household

Ingersoll: And it was through your father that you first met the Douglasses, wasn't it.

Chavoor: That's right. He, as I said, had a truck, and he used to serve the Douglasses on Hudson Avenue. This was the Hancock Park area of Los Angeles. I remember occasionally I'd see the checks for the monthly bills that had been paid and one would have "Melvyn Douglas-Helen Gahagan" on it. And I don't know why I knew who Helen Gahagan was, I just did. Maybe I read about her because she was married to Melvyn Douglas. But anyway, I recognized it. I was a freshman at UCLA, and my father asked me one day if I would be willing to work for them to earn some money. Who wouldn't! Even though there was no tuition at UCLA, you had to pay a student-body fee of \$27.50, and there were books to be bought. This was still in the days of the Depression [1935-1936].

Ingersoll: But there wasn't much money for spending money in those days.

Chavoor: So I said, "Sure. Great." So I used to leave UCLA; commuting was no problem because the Douglasses lived off of Wilshire Boulevard. I would get to their house about four o'clock; I would help the cook, and maybe pick and arrange the flowers. I would do whatever was necessary to be done, and then I would serve dinner and do the dishes and get home around ten o'clock. And that's where I learned how to set a proper table, how to serve a meal properly, how to serve from the left, remove from the right. (I'm trying to remember, is that right?)

Ingersoll: I think it is.

Chavoor: I became quite good, as a matter of fact. Then I used to help them when they had parties; caterers came in later years. I used to help out in the kitchen. I think maybe I learned to cook from Alma Hermann. She was a fantastic caterer. Anyway, that's what I did. And then I would go in on Saturdays, and wash windows or do Melvyn's shirts. I was a good shirt ironer--I'd done it for my father, my brother, my grandfather, my cousin, my various and sundry uncles. I guess I was quite good.

Ingersoll: They'd all given you a chance to practice on them before that.

Chavoor: That's how I met the Douglasses.

Ingersoll: This was in what year, about?

Chavoor: This is either the fall of '35, or early 1936. Probably the fall of '35. Because that's when I started at UCLA.

Melvyn tells a story of the first time he saw me, and I heard this subsequently. I obviously was not aware of it then. I was a very fat girl.

Ingersoll: It's hard to think of you that way with your lovely figure now.

Chavoor: Thank you. You're very kind. But I also had an exceptionally heavy growth of hair on my face, which I guess is indigenous to my background, and I was really very shy because of that.

Ingersoll: Yes, and also coming from that rather turned-in-on-the-family sort of background.

Chavoor: And also—it was painful to me then maybe, but it's not now, it doesn't bother me any more—on reflection, I had a brother (I have a brother) who preceded me by a year or two, I'm three years younger than he, who was a good student—scholar, and I followed him. I had to work at it, I got good grades but I couldn't be frivolous about it. My brother, who had to stay out of school almost a whole semester when my father was desperately ill, came back and graduated.

I remember that in one class in geometry or algebra two, Dr. Hagopian said, "Well, you're not your brother, obviously." And, of course, my brother then was a football star, in addition to being a good student. So everywhere I would go, "Oh, you're Sherman Chavoor's sister." And, of course, I was proud of that.

Anway, I was fat. And I used to help my father on his truck every Saturday. I would fill the boxes with vegetables and the fruits that were ordered, and I would carry them in. The house that the Douglasses had at that time was a Spanish-style house. There was a balcony all around the second floor, and it had French windows. Melvyn tells this story that he was standing and looking out the window one day as I was helping my father. The truck was parked in front of the house, I was going around the truck, and he turned around to Helen and he said, "That's the kind of a girl we ought to have to help us." As I say, I didn't know this until years and years later.

Ingersoll: Now, 1935, that's a year probably before Helen got into politics aggressively.



Chavoor: She frightened me [laughs]. She was, she is beautiful. She was young then and when I first laid eyes on her, oh wow! Tall, absolutely stunning. She was a "diva." She had been a star in the theater, she was singing in opera. She was a many-faceted, talented, delicious woman. I remember this house had a curving staircase. I remember one day the photographer had come to take some still shots for publicity. She had a costume on. I think it was from Tosca (yes, it must have been from Tosca). She was standing in the curve of the stairs. And an eighteen-year old, gawky kid, I was just looking up, gazing at her. She was very much involved with herself--Helen Gahagan.

#### Evolution of Helen Gahagan Douglas's Political-Social Involvement

Ingersoll: You saw a change in her, you thought as years, if not maybe months went by.

Chavoor: Well, in '36--some time in '36 and '37 Helen went to New York to be in a play--Melvyn went too. And then I think she went to Europe, because it was in '38 that Mary Helen was born. They had gone and I had gone to other things. I had gone to business school during that period and had finished business school. Jobs were hard to come by. Helen called me one day and asked if I could come and take care of Peter, their son, for about three months, or for a short period of time.

The governess they had had injured her eye, and she was going to go away for a few months until the eye healed, and then by that time Mary Helen would have been born, and she would be returning. So, I was there for two months, and Helen and Melvyn decided they wanted me to stay on and not leave. Bernice would not be coming back. So, I stayed on.

It was at that time that Helen got involved in social-political issues. Melvyn was involved with the Hollywood Democratic Committee, and Helen was involved with the migrants. I think that was when the involvement with migrants started because I remember when we moved up to the house on the top of the hill on Senalda Road, they were doing "Christmas for One Third of the Nation" then. That's right, so that it was just a few years. I don't know whether Helen's going to sing in Europe, when she saw the rise of Fascism and she came back and got involved in everything, triggered it, or whether it was a combination of events, because after she and Melvyn were first married they drove west to Hollywood, and Helen saw a migration then.



Ingersoll: This was about 1932, wasn't it?

Chavoor: Yes, 1932. She saw the migration then. Helen comes from a very large family, and her father (I never knew her father--he had gone when I first became acquainted with them) must have been a very civic-minded person. And I remember Helen telling me the story about when she wanted to go into the theater, she was out selling liberty bonds. This was before the First World War, or during the First World War. So I guess the seeds were there. Helen was Helen Gahagan. She became a very concerned, very involved, very active person in the cause of humanity.

Ingersoll: Did you say before that you thought perhaps Melvyn had something to do with getting her involved?

Chavoor: This is my own conclusion, and I could be entirely wrong, but Melvyn was active. I think one of the things that prompted the Hollywood Democratic Committee to be activated is the fact that the studios where Melvyn was affiliated would stipulate how much you were supposed to give, and it was always to the Republican party. And there was just a group of them who decided, well, we're going to do something about this. So they formed the Hollywood Democratic Committee. The activity was there; things were happening. And I think this is what happened. Helen came along and became involved and that was a part of it, and everything just burst open.

Ingersoll: Naturally?

Chavoor: Yes, naturally.

Ingersoll: As you were speaking about her background and your family, it brought a question to mind, and that was when I was looking over Current Biography for 1944 that had the write-up about Helen, I noted that it said that she was brought up in a very conservative family.

Chavoor: They were all Republican.

Ingersoll: And also one where there was quite strict discipline of the children. And I was wondering, as you told me something about your own background shining through in those years that also struck a note in Helen's background, of something that she valued that perhaps she was moving away from somewhat.

Chavoor: I don't know.

Ingersoll: Perhaps she felt that you could help keep something valuable alive in her children.

- Chavoor: I don't know. As I say, she was brought up in a very conservative family. She had a nurse. You're going to have to ask Helen that. I don't know. It was because I was a good kid. [Laughter]
- Ingersoll: You told me a story, too, about your first real meeting with Melvyn. Not the one where he saw you out of the window.
- Chavoor: Yes, because I wasn't aware of that one.
- Ingersoll: No. But when you both first met each other when you hadn't been in the house very long.
- Chavoor: It was a Saturday--I guess my first Saturday there, and Melvyn was at the studio. The garage was behind the house, and there was a backstairs behind the kitchen that would go up to the second story. I mentioned earlier that there was a balcony around the house with French windows, and this particular Saturday I was washing the windows. I heard the car stop and Melvyn came bounding up the stairs, and there I stood. He said, "Oh, you must be Evelyn. I'm Melvyn Douglas." [Laughs] I practically collapsed. He put his hand out, shook hands, and I fell in love with him.
- Ingersoll: An open, direct kind of person.
- Chavoor: Gee, what a delicious person. What a lovely person. And again I have to emphasize that I was eighteen years old. And as I say, I fell in love with him. I didn't go ga-ga because he was a movie star. There was something beautiful about him.
- Ingersoll: A very special kind of person.
- Chavoor: Yes. Just beautiful. And he is too today.
- Ingersoll: What a marvelous thing to be able to say after all those years.
- Chavoor: He's something special; so is she. I suppose there are a lot of other people in this world that are like that, and I shouldn't use the word "unique," but to me they're "unique." I think one of the interesting things and one of the nice things is that after all these years, not only for me but for many persons who have been associated with them, there has been a long, continuous relationship, and it has been a warm, harmonious relationship. So often these kinds of things become acrimonious. And that didn't happen, it hasn't happened, it doesn't exist. And I think this says a lot for them.
- Ingersoll: Oh, it does. Lucy Kramer Cohen whom I talked to on the telephone, you know the economist in Helen Douglas's congressional office, said the same thing. Not only was the relationship with them a

- Ingersoll: very warm one, but because of the kind of person Helen Douglas is, and also Melvyn, people who worked around her, and the people she chose to have around her, established a relationship with her, and among themselves, which was one that they valued all through the years.
- Chavoor: And the other thing is that there was no vying, no tension, no who was going to sit at the throne. I never felt it, I never had that, and I certainly didn't sense it among anybody around me. If anybody came and said that somebody was going to be doing something, that's fine--if they can do it better, that's just great. Let them do it. And I think this was because of the tone that Helen set. [Phone rings; tape turned off]
- Ingersoll: Was it during the years that you worked in the household that Helen was working with the Farm Securities Administration on migrant problems?
- Chavoor: Yes. I rejoined the family a few months before Mary Helen was born. The house on Senalda Road was nearing completion. Helen came home from the hospital with Mary Helen and after a couple of months the move was made. There was some painting left to be done so Mary Helen and I went to the home of Dr. and Mrs. Pertson and Lola and Jack Leighter, the Pertsons' daughter and son-in-law. We stayed there a couple of weeks until the painting was completed and then went up to the house. It was during that time that Helen was active with the migrants and with the Farm Security Administration. And it was during that time that Melvyn was very active in campaigning to elect Governor Olson. There was a lot of activity going on.
- Ingersoll: Oh, there must have been, yes.
- Chavoor: With an infant and Peter, I've forgotten how old Peter was, he was about five years old.
- Ingersoll: What was the household like in those days as you remember it? Was there a lot of staff?
- Chavoor: Walter Pick, who was Helen's cousin, was a secretary. There was a full-time gardener. I was there, and I took care of the children. There was a Chinese cook during that period and a houseboy. There were a lot of people. There were a lot of things going on.
- Ingersoll: Oh, there must have been, judging from the things that they were involved in. Was there very much privacy in this kind of a household, or was everybody's life pretty much available to everybody else?



- Chavor: On reflection--I wasn't aware of it then--when I look back on it, I guess the only way you could have any privacy was if you went to your own room, your own bedroom, and closed the door, and maybe even locked it. There were the two children in one wing of the house. In those days we didn't have baby foods like we do now, and I would be traipsing from one wing of the house to the kitchen, fixing the fruits and the vegetables and the formula and traipsing back. I suppose you couldn't even go and sit in the living room without somebody going back and forth at some point or another.
- Ingersoll: So privacy was something that really had to be worked at.
- Chavor: Yes, and it was a precious commodity.
- Ingersoll: Not just something that came naturally.
- Chavor: If it had been a two-story house where the bedrooms, the nursery were upstairs, it would have been different. But this was a house that was on one level--it was a magnificent house--it is a magnificent house, only they don't own it any more. You could go outside into the patio from every room, except from the nursery wing which overlooks a hillside. From the living room, the dining room and the kitchen, from the butler's pantry you could walk outside. That also meant that when you were traversing from one wing of the house to another, unless you walked outside via the patio, to get to the kitchen, you would have to go through the living room and the dining room.
- Ingersoll: Oh, yes, that would make it very difficult to have privacy.
- Chavor: Now sometimes there would be guests in the living room, and obviously you would go round, and of course the weather in California isn't like it is in the East, you can go out without any trouble. You'd be knocking at a door, asking a question, calling to Helen, "What would you like to have for dinner tonight? When do you want lunch served?" And you'd probably think aaah!
- Ingersoll: Coming at her from all directions all the time surely.
- Chavor: There was Walter, and there were the two children, and I.
- Ingersoll: Was this during the period when Helen and Melvyn were going to Washington and had a good deal of contact with Mrs. Roosevelt in New Deal areas?
- Chavor: Oh, yes. You see, Helen started with the migrants and the Farm Security Administration, and it was that year, I think it was in the--was it '40 she was elected [Democratic] national committee-woman [from California]?

Ingersoll: Yes.

Chavoor: Yes, in '40. Okay. She was acquainted and worked with all these people. And there were a lot of goings and comings. I left in '41 to come to Washington for the first time. So it was '38, '39, '40.

Ingersoll: Frank Mankiewicz [in Perfectly Clear: Nixon from Whittier to Watergate] says that Helen Gahagan Douglas went into politics as the protege of Eleanor Roosevelt. What do you feel about that in the light of your experiences and the things that you saw at that time during the early years as she was moving toward a political life?

Chavoor: Well, I guess that's Frank Mankiewicz's interpretation, and everyone can have a different insight into it. Obviously she was acquainted with the Roosevelts. Obviously she had great respect and admiration for Mrs. Roosevelt. Mrs. Roosevelt might have been a motivating factor in her life, but I think that prior to the contact with Mrs. Roosevelt and the friendship that developed, Helen was already moving--had started to move, let me put it that way. And in the causes she was involved in--and one particular cause, the migrants --she brought Mrs. Roosevelt out to California.

Ingersoll: Oh, she did?

Chavoor: Right. She did bring Mrs. Roosevelt out, and Mrs. Roosevelt did come to California, and Helen took her to the camps, and everything.

Ingersoll: Were you involved in that particular episode?

Chavoor: No. I was there primarily to take care of the children. At one time Walter was hospitalized (he had an appendectomy). During that period Melvyn was serving on the board of the California Welfare Commission having been appointed by Governor Olson. I would be doing some secretarial work at night, typing the stuff Melvyn had dictated, but I was primarily a servant in the house. What I learned and what I heard and what I absorbed, I was not directly involved in, in answer to your question.

#### Helen Gahagan Douglas's Friends from the Late Thirties and Early Forties

Ingersoll: There were a great many people in and out of the household at that time, weren't there? People who later were important in her campaigning, in her Washington office, perhaps.

- Chavoor: Primarily in her campaign.
- Ingersoll: Yes. Some of these people whom we talked about last week. Were these people who were in and out during those days--how about Frank Mankiewicz?
- Chavoor: No. At least not to my knowledge, let me put it that way. I don't want to be so damn emphatic. I became acquainted with Frank Mankiewicz early in 1950.
- Ingersoll: Yes, I guess that's probably right. He remembers you from about 1950, judging from that inscription in your copy of Perfectly Clear which he gave to you saying, to twenty-five years of friendship.\*
- Chavoor: That was when I first knew Frank.
- Ingersoll: What about Frank Rogers, the writer on the Los Angeles paper--the Los Angeles Daily News.
- Chavoor: He was a reporter on the Los Angeles Daily News.
- Ingersoll: Was he involved in those days?
- Chavoor: He was not in and out during the migrant days--pre-1944 days--as I recall. Frank was a reporter, as I said on the Los Angeles Daily News, and I think it was in the 1944 campaign that he became involved.\*\*
- Ingersoll: And Esther Murray. Was she from your early days?
- Chavoor: Esther Murray would be American Association of University Women. She was associated with, worked with Helen during the time when Helen was national committeewoman and state vice-chairman, and now whether she was there--I'm trying to remember if Esther was around when I was there in '38.
- [end tape 1, side A; begin tape 1, side B]

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\* Loaned to Fern S. Ingersoll by Evelyn Chavoor. In this copy there is the inscription: "For Evie Chavoor--who knew all the time that Watergate was no surprise--From her admirer of 25 years, Frank Mankiewicz, December, 1973."

\*\* Frank Rogers, "Helen Gahagan Douglas and the 1950 Primary Campaign," an oral history conducted in 1976 in "Helen Gahagan Douglas, Volume I: The Political Campaigns," Regional Oral History Office, University of California, Berkeley, 1981.



- Chavoor: I don't think so, and I could be completely wrong because again, maybe I did see quite a few of the people. I think it came later, maybe around '40.
- Ingersoll: Around '40 that they were associated. How about Harold Shapiro? Was he one of the very early ones?
- Chavoor: I remember Harold Shapiro primarily starting in 1944 when Helen was running for Congress for the first time. He was then affiliated with the Shipyard Workers' Union in Long Beach.
- Ingersoll: In '44?
- Chavoor: Yes, I think that's correct.
- Ingersoll: Is there anybody that you remember who came from those really very early days.
- Chavoor: Susie Clifton. [Laughs]
- Ingersoll: Tell me a little bit about her.
- Chavoor: Oh, Susie is a tremendous person. Susie was very active in the Governor Olson campaign, and then she was very active in Helen's campaign. Susie has three children--four children, and I remember, besides her working in the campaign, she was really Susie the Riveter. She went out and did riveting during the war.
- Ingersoll: With children, politics, and working.
- Chavoor: With children, everything. It just floored me. To this day, I remember how I just kind of stood there with my mouth wide open. Susie would sew all night in case there was a function she had to have a new dress for. Sew all night and get no sleep, and... Her husband later became a judge, a superior court judge in California. He is now retired. And Susie, who is older than I, not by much, joined the Peace Corps--she and Bob. They went to Micronesia. That wasn't too long ago. That's Susie Clifton.
- Ingersoll: And she helped on campaigns in later years for Helen?
- Chavoor: Oh, yes. And she was very active in the '50 campaign also.
- Ingersoll: Was she?
- Chavoor: Oh, yes.
- Ingersoll: Anybody else from those days?

Chavoor: Well, Florence Reynolds has now gone. Al Meyers.

Ingersoll: But Florence Reynolds was somebody from those early days?

Chavoor: Now what are we talking about? Are you talking about pre-'44?

Ingersoll: Yes, but '44 is when you first remember, right?

Chavoor: Right. Pre-'44? All right, I'm going to repeat myself. You have to remember that '40, '41, I wasn't there all the time, and prior to that I had no direct contact with all the persons that were involved. Jack and Lola Leighter were around. I can't--

Ingersoll: I was just interested on the point of whether there had been people from very early days who helped with later campaigns. But even to go back as far as '44 and to stay active in three campaigns was a great deal.

#### Evelyn Chavoor's Career

Chavoor: As I think about it, I'll try to stretch my mind a little bit.

Ingersoll: I thought it was very interesting when you said last week that there had been two strong countervailing pulls in what the Douglasses wanted; what they wanted for themselves and what they wanted for you. There was a period when they very much wanted your help, wanted you with them, and yet were very aware that you had a growing career that they wanted to allow to grow. Can you expand on that a little bit? Now, you went off to Washington?

Chavoor: Yes. I took a Civil Service exam, and I passed and I got an invitation to come to work in Washington at the Treasurer's office, in the Treasury Department. For the magnificent sum of \$1,440 per annum. That sounds like nothing now, but believe me in those days --well, when you don't have a job. [Laughs]

Ingersoll: It's a great deal, of course.

Chavoor: Anyway, I had to go to Helen and Melvyn to borrow \$400 to pay for my passage, and maybe buy some clothes or whatever it was. And I want you to know that on \$1,440 per annum I saved enough money to take a train back a year and a half later, and I repaid the loan. [Laughter]

Anyway, I was living in a boarding house with fifteen girls (it was very funny). It happened to be a Jewish boarding house, and the fifteen girls that lived there were all Jewish. Two of

Chavoor: them had gone to high school with me in Los Angeles, and so when I went to live there and when I asked if I could live in their boarding house, they said, "You're not Jewish." I said, "No, I'm not." And they said, "You still want to come and live in this house?" I said, "Sure." And so I did. I grew up in a neighborhood as a child, when I was in grammar school and junior high school in Los Angeles, in an area where mostly Jewish people resided. So I learned the difference between the "melching" [dairy products] and "fleishchig" [meat products], and I learned some words. There were twins next door who were three months older than I. I was always over there. I used to light the fires on Saturdays because they were a very orthodox family. Mrs. Goldstein's friends would always ask who I was. Then Mrs. Goldstein would tell them, "Oh, she's the shikseh who lives next door." Anyway, it was not something strange to me.

While I was there, this was when Melvyn was going to join the army--he had enlisted--and he was going to leave. I can't give you the exact dates; it had to be sometime after Pearl Harbor which was December 7, 1941, and it was before I went back to Los Angeles in '42 sometime, so it was in that period. And I got this call from Melvyn and Helen one night, and oh, the excitement in that place--they came to wake me up. "Evie, Evie, it's Melvyn Douglas, Melvyn Douglas is calling." Anyway, we chatted.

At the time I was not happy. I don't know whether it was because it was the first time I had ever been away from home, or whether it was the people around me who were always talking about how much leave they were going to have, and whether we were going to earn this, or whether we were going to be getting this or that or the other thing. The whole conversation it seemed at work was always how much sick leave they were going to get, or how much annual leave they were going to get.

Ingersoll: How different from the whole spirit in the Douglas household.

Chavoor: And I was not a happy person--I blame that on myself. So when Helen asked if I would come back (I guess Melvyn was a little bit reluctant to go and leave Helen alone), I said "Yes." And they said, "Okay, we'll be in touch with you." And then I waited and waited, champing at the bit, waiting for the call. And the call came: "Well, we just decided it's not fair. You've just started a career of your own." I was a Grade 2 stenographer. [Laughs] "It's just not fair." So I didn't go back. I was terribly disappointed.

But, I guess time takes care of things. I finally did go back, after a year and a half, in 1942, on a visit ostensibly. And while I was there (of course the war was on), my father said,



- Chavoor: "Why don't you see if you can't get something here?" And I did. It was during the time when I was working for the Office of Defense Transportation that Helen--
- Ingersoll: The Office of Defense Transportation in Los Angeles?
- Chavoor: Office of Defense Transportation in Los Angeles, yes. I would go up to the house periodically when Helen would call me to lend her assistance. And then when she decided she would run for Congress, she said, "Do you want to take a chance?" I said, "Sure."
- Ingersoll: You gave up your Office of Defense Transportation job?
- Chavoor: I really took a leave of absence, and worked in the campaign. I don't know whether technically that was proper or not. And then when she was nominated in June--she won the nomination--then I quit. That's when she said, "Do you want to take a chance?" Then I quit. I quit my job in June 1944, because she had won the primary election, and then it was a question of whether she was going to make it in the fall, and she did.
- Ingersoll: There was a story that you mentioned to me before about applying for a job in the--
- Chavoor: Department of Justice? When I first returned to Los Angeles I thought, okay, where do I start? I've always had, I guess it was a latent interest, in law. I had gone to business school, and I had done some temporary work in law firms--as a matter of fact I served an apprenticeship in a law firm that my dad had arranged for me. And so I thought I would go to the Department of Justice.

And I filled out a Form 57, which was then the government form, the number's changed now, and where it said "References or persons who can vouch for you, et cetera" I put Helen Gahagan Douglas and Melvyn Douglas, and went to the United States Attorney's Office, said I was applying for a job, handed in my resume, and the next thing I knew the United States attorney for that district was there. He called me into his office and wanted to talk to me about salary and grades, and I was a Grade 2--no, I had been promoted to a Grade 3. I had been taken out of the pool, and I was the secretary to one of the men in the division, so I was now a Grade 3 at \$1620 per annum.

Well, they didn't have an opening at Grade 3, but they had one at Grade 2, and he was going to talk to Washington or cable Washington, or write to Washington to see if they couldn't arrange it. I came away and thought that was fine and dandy; they were going to let me know. I thought nothing of it, but I subsequently went and applied for the job at the Office of Defense Transportation and got the job at a Grade 3, and I didn't have to wait or anything else.

Chavoor: Well, it shows you what a naive, little [laughs]-- It never occurred to me that Helen Gahagan Douglas was national committeewoman, state vice-chairman, and Melvyn had been with Governor Olson, which was a state thing and didn't really affect that at all, and I walked in very nonchalantly and I just handed this paper in with Helen Gahagan Douglas's name on it. It never occurred to me as to why they would be so eager to get me. They probably thought that Helen had sent me. I don't know what they thought.

Ingersoll: But doors began to open.

Chavoor: But doors began to open. And it's a normal thing in the political arena.

Ingersoll: And, have you found this through the years, that doors have begun to open?

Chavoor: I've been very fortunate. When one door closed another door opened for me. And not because of the political--I have to qualify that. Well, it was because people knew me, because they knew I worked for Helen. After she was defeated, Abe Fortas took me in out of the cold, and I only knew Abe Fortas through Helen.

Ingersoll: That was in his law office?

Chavoor: In his law office, yes. And then when Blair Moody was appointed to be the Senator from the state of Michigan after Vandenberg [Arthur] died, India Edwards asked me to go and work on Moody's staff. He was later defeated. And then somebody called me whom I'd known through my tenure in Helen's office, and asked if I would come back to be his assistant in the Research Division of the Democratic National Committee.

Ingersoll: Who was that?

Chavoor: That was Phil Stern. Philip M. Stern the author, now the author. And then I left that to go back to Los Angeles to be Roz Wyman's field representative. She was Rosalind Wiener then, and had just been elected to the city council. And then when that didn't quite work out, they asked me if I would take over the Southern California division of the campaign for the governor at that time. It was Richard P. Graves who was running for governor on the Democratic ticket. There had been some kind of a conflict over the state chairmanship, and there had been an exodus of campaign people. And I did that. And he lost; we knew he was going to lose. That's neither here nor there.

Then the telephone rang one day and Paul Ziffren said, "Paul Butler's just been named chairman of the Democratic National Committee. Is there any reason, family reason, why you can't



Chavoor: consider taking the job of being his assistant?" It kind of left me stunned because I didn't know Paul Butler, he didn't know me, but he knew people who knew me, and I had just worked on the Graves campaign, taken it over. So, as I say, I've been very fortunate. It isn't the same kind of thing as going and applying for a job and having the Democratic national committee person--whether it's a man or a woman--or somebody who knows a Senator say, "Give this girl a job." These other things just opened up for me. But in this particular instance, on reflection--this realization didn't come upon me until much later--

Ingersoll: These other things are different where people who knew your qualifications or knew people who were respected and knew your qualifications--

Chavoor: Opened the doors for me.

Ingersoll: Were many of these people who introduced you to other people, people who had been connected with Helen Gahagan Douglas?

Chavoor: Yes. Obviously India Edwards. Obviously Abe Fortas. In '50 when I was in Los Angeles in the campaign, Phil Stern had done some work in Helen's Washington office for her. I wasn't there. Later, when I was working for Blair Moody in the Senate, Phil was doing work for Senator Paul Douglas of Illinois, so our paths crossed then.

And then he said, "Oh, you must be Evie who used to be with Helen." He later became the Director of Research at the Democratic National Committee and that's when he invited me to come back to Washington. Then I went back to California to work with Roz Wyman, and then Paul Ziffren. Paul Ziffren called me. He was very much in Helen's campaign in 1950.

Ingersoll: That happened really on quite a number of occasions.

Chavoor: My initial knowledge, contact, acquaintanceship.

Ingersoll: I think when you were telling me about the job with Paul Butler before you said that when the person asked you if you would like to work with Paul Butler, they gave a description of working with him as being something like working with Helen Douglas.

Chavoor: When they called me I said, "But he doesn't know me. Doesn't he have people he's worked with in Indiana?"--because he was from Indiana. Obviously he had to be involved politically or he wouldn't have been named chairman of the Democratic National Committee. I said it seemed so strange. And they said, "No. And we have suggested you." They said, "You will like him. You'll be happy with him. He's just like Helen, he has all the qualities and



Chavoor: all the--." And I said, "Okay, that's fine, but I want to be sure he is going to like me. He hasn't seen me, he's never set eyes on me." And they said, "It will work. And you'll be happy with him because he is so much like Helen." So, I said, "Okay, I'll do it, but there's going to be a three months' trial period to see whether he likes me, or whether we can do the job together or not." I stayed for two-and-a-half years.

Ingersoll: Do you think this was an important point in your choosing to do or not to do a job as the years went by, this sort of working relationship you would have in an office, when you'd had such a good working relationship with Helen Douglas? Was this something you were searching for again through the years of political life?

Chavoor: Well, I suppose my feeling is this: If I'm going to be working in a political arena, it has to be for somebody, or with somebody, who has the same philosophy, and the same approach to problems and people, and legislation that I have. Otherwise, I could not possibly be a loyal employee. I couldn't work with anybody who didn't feel issue-wise as I do. I can't go work for a Republican, for instance. And in that respect, I think the answer to your question would have been yes.

I never sat down and really thought through what I wanted to do, and where would I go from here after Helen was defeated. As I said earlier, one door closed and another door just opened. I never really had to actively--I can't say that--go and look for a job. That's not true. After Helen was defeated I did have to go out. But after that I didn't.

Ingersoll: And there were periods of time, even when you had stepped out of the job world to look after your family, I understand--your mother, your father, when--probably because of the connections, and because of your own qualifications--you were able to go back into the career stream.

Chavoor: You know, though, you can have the qualifications, but if there isn't something that opens the door for you, then you go out looking--cold. I did it once cold. After my father died, and I had to return--I didn't have to return to Los Angeles, I take it back--after I chose to return to Los Angeles. There was a question of what we as a family were going to do with regard to our mother.

Anyway, I had been working for the Gahagan Dredging Corporation in Tampa at that time, when I left, and they were very generous and kind. When I returned to Los Angeles I decided I wasn't going to work for two or three months, until I could pull myself together, and do somethings around the house. During that period Helen and Melvyn paid a visit to Los Angeles, and I really wanted to have a

Chavoor: gathering for them at my house--my mother's house--to invite all the people who had worked in the campaigns, and the people they would like to see.

Then Roz Wyman called me, and she said, "I want to have a party for Helen and Melvyn." And I said, "I'm going to have the party for Helen and Melvyn." And she said, "Oh, we just moved into our house up in Bel Air." And they have a mansion, she still has it, in Bel Air. She said, "This is my first party and I can't think of anything I would rather do for my first party than to have a party for Helen and Melvyn." Well, I can't compete with her mansion, even though my mother's house was fairly large. Anyway, I said, "Okay. That's fine."

And it was just prior to that, or right around that time that Gene Wyman, who was her husband--he died recently (it was tragic)--called me and said, "It's a hell of a note. I have to hear from other people that you're sitting here in Los Angeles, and you've been here for a couple of months; why don't you come up and see me." So, I trotted up to his office, and he offered me the job of office managing his law firm. That night at the dinner party, my arm got twisted, and I took the job. [Laughs] And so I office-managed Gene Wyman's office for five years. Again, that was as a result of their awareness of me because of Helen.

When I left that law firm, and I wanted to come back to Washington, I was employed by the law firm of Covington and Burling--not because of any political connections, or anybody I knew.

Ingersoll: So your moving in and out of the political arena happened several times, and happened in rather different ways in terms of perhaps a connection with Helen Gahagan Douglas, or perhaps not always.

Chavoor: Well, mostly. I think mostly. Except this last time. When I say the last time, I mean when I went to Covington and Burling. They needed somebody, and I happened to be in the right place at the right time. They were looking for someone with legal background, and supervisory background, and secretarial training background, and so forth, and I happened to fit the bill.

Ingersoll: It would be interesting to have a chronological list of these different things because there's been such a variety of these different sorts of things you've done. Can you give me one?

Chavoor: Sure. I would be glad to.\*

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\*See pages 338-348.

The Congressional Years

[Interview 2: January 23, 1977]

[begin tape 2, side A]

Campaigning: The District, Methods, Supporters, Style

Ingersoll: Let's go on and talk a little bit about the congressional years today, Evie. Maybe we could start with campaigning, and what that was like. What was your own part in the 1944 campaign?

Chavoor: Well, first I was a neophyte in actually working in a campaign, I guess. Melvyn was overseas in the war. I left my government job to work in the campaign. We had no household help. And so, I was there, and I was with Helen, and I was in the house with the children, and I was doing whatever had to be done, whatever I could do. I was with her mostly, I drove her. And I was down at the headquarters, doing whatever had to be done, whatever they asked me to do.

Ingersoll: Did you travel with her? You said you drove her, and you told us the last time about the gas coupons from your father.

Chavoor: Yes, in '44 I used to go to the meetings with her, wherever they were scheduled, during the day, at night.

Ingersoll: Can you remember any of those meetings, either in Negro churches or in the houses where I understand they were held.

Chavoor: You have to remember that Helen's district wasn't predominantly black.

Ingersoll: Was not predominantly black?

Chavoor: It was not predominantly black. There was a black section, where predominantly black people lived. But then we had a little section on Wilshire Boulevard that was called the "silk-stocking area," so she had that. Then there was an area of middle-income white people. It was basically and essentially a Democratic district, with a big D as far as registration was concerned. And there was one assembly district--or two--anyway, one assembly district was all black, inhabited by black persons. And I used to go with her. Part of the district, I'm trying to think, was skid row.

Ingersoll: Oh, that was part?



Chavoor: Yes.

Ingersoll: Did she go to that part?

Chavoor: Oh sure. She went wherever they invited her. I remember one night we went to a meeting down on the east side of town, where the meat packing houses were. We went into this bar; I was with her. My memory is very vague on this, but--

Ingersoll: Sounds like an interesting story.

Chavoor: I can't remember whether somebody said this was maybe an entrapment or something, and I said, "Oh, that's ridiculous." But there the two of us were, two women, nonchalantly-- The other thing you have to remember, in '44 the temper of the times wasn't like it is now, where you're-- We didn't have any fear, we went. You know, a lot of things have happened since then to cause us to be fearful.

Ingersoll: But your feeling was that there was nothing to be afraid of at that time?

Chavoor: No. We went, and it was a bar. It was kind of seamy. Helen went in and made her speech and everything else. And later on everybody said they were absolutely petrified that we'd gone there. We were pretty nonchalant about it.

Ingersoll: Do you have any idea how she happened to go there?

Chavoor: I can't remember. The invitation came, and evidently the one who was setting up the schedule thought it was legitimate. Helen kept saying, "Where are you taking me, Chavoor?" I said, "What the hell, that's the address they gave me, I'm taking you down there." [Laughter]

Ingersoll: What kind of a response did she get?

Chavoor: It wasn't jam-packed obviously. They were all very attentive.

Ingersoll: Questions afterwards, do you remember?

Chavoor: I can't remember, Fern. I do remember the episode, very vaguely, and we did go there. So, wherever there were meetings set up she would go, and she went to people's homes, and she went ringing doorbells.

Ingersoll: Did you ring doorbells, too?

Chavoor: Yes, I rang doorbells, too. She would go up one side of the street, I would go down the other side of the street. Susie Clifton would do part of a block, and Esther Murray would do part of a block. And

- Chavoor: Helen would go up, when she would see somebody standing on a walk, watering or clipping, and she'd say, "I'm Helen Gahagan Douglas and I'm running for Congress." And one man said, "I know who you are, young lady. Aren't you too young to be running for Congress?" [Laughter] And she was all of forty-four years old, but she probably looked much younger.
- Ingersoll: Do you remember any of the other responses you got when you or Helen rang the doorbells?
- Chavoor: I don't recall them so much in '44. I recall them in 1950. Some of those weren't very pleasant.
- Ingersoll: We might save the whole 1950 story for another time because that gets more complicated. Why was it that Helen chose to run in that district? It wasn't a district she lived in.
- Chavoor: No, it wasn't. But it's my understanding that President Franklin Roosevelt asked her to run because Tom Ford, who occupied the seat, was retiring.
- Ingersoll: And she was close to the Roosevelts at that time.
- Chavoor: She was close to the Roosevelts. I don't know if he asked her directly himself, or through emissaries, or whatever. This was the message that she got.
- Ingersoll: Juanita Terry Barbee said that there were many people in the district who felt that they had good people, that Gus Hawkins might have been a good possibility.
- Chavoor: Well, as a matter of fact, if I recall correctly, in the primary she beat four or five other people. There was no reticence or hesitancy on the part of other candidates to run in that district. And they did. I think there was a councilman--there were at least four others, there may have been five.
- Ingersoll: I remember Frank Rogers saying there was quite a variety of people who ran.
- Chavoor: Yes, and she beat them. Maybe she beat them because they were all split and they siphoned off votes here and there and everywhere, or whatever. Or maybe people were just for her whether she lived in the district or not. But she beat them. She got the nomination. And as I recall, Gus Hawkins, who is now a member of Congress, and a tremendous representative and human being, and has done great things, and is continuing to do them, was at that time a member of the state legislature. I don't recall, but I don't know whether he was in the picture at that time or not. I know that after Helen

Chavoor: was defeated for the Senate in '50, that Sam Yorty occupied the seat. Now, at some point there was reapportionment, and another part of the district was carved out, and a new district was created because later on Jimmy Roosevelt had part of that district. So, it was open season. Tom Ford was retiring, and Helen announced, and filed, and so did four others, and she won.

Regarding Gus Hawkins and Juanita's statement that there were many people in the district who felt that they had good people, that Gus Hawkins might have been a good possibility: I was not politically aware at that time--that is, at the time I entered into the campaign, I had no knowledge as to who the politicians were in the fourteenth district. Juanita would be more conversant on the subject. Her mother Jessie Terry was involved in politics in the district. I became aware of Gus Hawkins through my activity in the campaign and thereafter.

Ingersoll: So, it wouldn't seem to you that she had any reason to be bothered by the fact that somebody like Gus Hawkins may have been there, because as you say, a variety of people were running.

Chavoor: A lot of people thought, well, why should she run, and they entered the race. I think that later on, there was some concern, and I think maybe there was some feeling that Gus should have been the candidate. He always supported her. Terrific.

Ingersoll: That's interesting.

Chavoor: And they were good friends. She got to know him.

Ingersoll: Let's talk about the campaign supporters a little bit. Ed Lybeck was the manager in '44. Was he in '46 and '48 also?

Chavoor: Yes. Well, let me clarify it. He was in '44, and either in '46 or '48, or both of those two. He might at that time have been working for the Housing Authority, and thereby would not have been eligible to be working politically; and either in '46 or '48, or during both of those campaigns, his wife Ruth Lybeck was the campaign manager.

Ingersoll: Oh, I see. So one of the Lybecks was the manager for all of the campaigns.

Chavoor: But Ed was for the first one, and he might have been for the second one. As a matter of fact, I think he was. But both of them are now gone, God love them, because they were two tremendous, beautiful human beings. And they both died too young. So history will record this properly: Ruth was the campaign manager when Ed could not be.



Ingersoll: What kind of person was Ed Lybeck as campaign manager?

Chavoor: Ed Lybeck was the political animal who knew the district like he knew his own name. He was down-to-earth, nothing phony about him, real "old-shoe." I considered him with no peer. Others will argue and disagree with me on that, but that's the way I felt about him. At least, I feel this is so with regard to the Fourteenth Congressional District of California.

He took someone, who had a name, there's no doubt about it, who was not a political unknown. She had a name, yes, in the theater and as Melvyn Douglas's wife, and a name in her own right, because politically and civically, she had been an activist, so that she was known; but to the preponderance of the people of the fourteenth district she may not have been known. She would have been known to the people who were political animals, but he took her, guided her through a primary campaign, and directed the kind of a campaign that won her the election. Now, I grant you that the district was a Democratic district, and once he got her through the primaries there was no chance of anybody losing it. But, no matter how sure a district is it always takes some doing, I feel. Ed Lybeck and Ruth did it.

Ingersoll: They must have been splendid people, really. Was it an easy thing for Helen to get campaign supporters?

Chavoor: I don't recall that we had any trouble. There were a lot of us who didn't live in the district who were there. [Laughs] I didn't live in the district, I lived in the fifteenth district, although I grew up in the fourteenth district. I went through high school when I was living in the fourteenth district; but then we moved after that, and I lived in the fifteenth which was adjoining. But, no, we didn't have any trouble.

Ingersoll: Can you tell me about any of the campaign workers whom you remember especially? I think you might have mentioned Harold Shapiro.

Chavoor: Harold was really with the Shipyard Workers, and I've forgotten what his role was during the '44, '46, and '48 campaigns. I know that in the '50 campaign he helped. But there were people in the district also who were very helpful, ones who helped.

Ingersoll: Would there have been a good many of those shipyard workers living in the district, was that the kind of a district that it was, would you think?

Chavoor: I just think that maybe there were a lot of union people living in the district. I can't say that they were shipyard workers particularly.

Ingersoll: Helen did find quite a number of people living in the district who were willing to help, did she?

Chavoor: Oh, yes. She didn't have any trouble. I can't even remember who her first opponent was, isn't that terrible? Somebody by the name of Braden was in a subsequent campaign, and a fellow by the name of Roberts, and there was a black man I believe. We used to say Negro in those days. Who was her first opponent?

Ingersoll: I guess I don't know that either. That's something we can look up fairly easily. It's these attitudinal things that are harder to get at, of course. You told me a story that first time we met, about Helen's uncertainty for running again, either in '46 or '48, and a telephone call she got at that time which convinced her she should run and exemplified some of the feelings of her supporters. Could you recall that again?

Chavoor: I think it had to be in '48. It had to be, because in '46 there was no question about it. Helen didn't even go out to campaign. That year she sent a post card to every voter in the district, signed by her, saying that she was at the United Nations taking care of the problems of this, and this, and this-- Somewhere somebody's got to have that post card that she sent out. That was the only piece of campaign literature I think we had.

Ingersoll: I wish there were a copy of that in your big box of things that I've been going over, but I don't think there was.

Chavoor: It's not. What I have is very sketchy, and I never dreamed--

Ingersoll: But it's likely to be in Oklahoma.

Chavoor: It must be. I'm sure wherever Ed Lybeck's papers are there would be a copy of that card.\* Anyway, what were we talking about?

Ingersoll: You were going to tell me the story of how she was convinced to run in the '48 campaign.

Chavoor: Helen had not sent her papers back that she had signed to file. I remember I was in her office and the phone rang and she answered the phone and it was Ed Lybeck, and they were chatting, and Helen demurred saying, "Well, I haven't quite made up my mind." I don't know whether I'm going to run again or not." And whatever the

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\*The Lybeck papers are at University of California at Los Angeles.

- Chavoor: voice on the other end said, Helen said, "Damn you, that's the one thing I didn't want to hear you say." And I later heard that the voice on the other end had said, "You can't do that, too many people have given too much of themselves." The blood, sweat, and tears sort of thing, although they may not have been the words. Ed was very good with words. So she ran.
- Ingersoll: And that's what got her for that next election.
- Chavoor: She knew it, but she was being Helen. [Laughs]
- Ingersoll: Tell me a little bit about her campaign style. The campaigning is always such a draining sort of thing for candidates, I think. What was Helen like during election campaigns?
- Chavoor: Helen always had a story to tell. Helen always had an issue. Helen always had something she was interested in, working for, fighting for, so she found no difficulty going in and, I call it "educating," but she wouldn't call it that. Just talking with people. Telling them what was happening. This was the kind of thing she did before she ran for Congress. She was just very much issue-oriented, very much people-oriented, and wanting to make everything right for everybody.
- Ingersoll: You thought there was an ease about her during these campaigning days?
- Chavoor: There is always a certain amount of tension, there's always a certain amount of getting everything in place, and there were the two children who had to be cared for.
- Ingersoll: That must have been very difficult, surely.
- Chavoor: And so, when you're on the go and on the run, whether you're running for office or whether you are a woman who has a family and is going to an office every day to be a secretary, or whatever, there's always something that has to be done to help meet a schedule. And so there was that kind of tension. I'm trying to remember, I guess it was in the '44 campaign that Sarah and George Douglas were living at the house.
- Ingersoll: Were they Melvyn's mother and father?
- Chavoor: That was Melvyn's brother and his wife. And his mother was living in an apartment on Wilshire Boulevard. This is awful. How could I forget such a vital part of my life? It was the '44 campaign, because in the '50 campaign, Bobby Walker was staying with us, so it was in the '44 campaign. So, anyway, getting back to the question of was it easy.



Ingersoll: Did having relatives in the house like that make the household situation easier or harder?

Chavoor: It made it easier.

Ingersoll: Someone for the children to--

Chavoor: Someone to keep the home fires burning.

Ingersoll: Somebody to be with, somebody to oversee all of that.

Chavoor: Yes.

Ingersoll: In some of that material of yours, one of the articles by a Washington Star writer who heard Helen speak at a Democratic Women's Club luncheon some years later, said there were traces of her earlier professions--actress, opera star--in the way she spoke, in her political style, which she described as "forthright and vivid."\* Would you agree about the traces of earlier professions?

Chavoor: I suppose. I just feel that that's Helen, but someone else looking at her could say that this was the theatrical background and so forth, and maybe it was. I recall an incident in the '50 campaign, I think. She was terribly ill; you know, she was tired, she had a cold, she was drained, and we wanted to cancel. She was going to go to Long Beach, I think it was (was it Long Beach or San Pedro?) anyway, to make a speech, and I said, "Let's cancel. I don't know what your temperature is." We didn't cancel. So, she was lying in the back of the car and we drove to wherever it was. This was a union meeting or a labor meeting, and I don't know whether it was their convention, or what the details were.

We got there and she got out and went up to the platform and they presented her, and sick as she was she got up and made this speech. Well, they responded, and the more they responded the more she went on, and she really-- It was really a blockbuster. And they sent up a big sheaf of red roses, and she started all over again, and I thought, my God! And so finally I went and I tugged at her, and I said, "Enough already." At any rate, she got back into the car and she collapsed. I don't know, it's just like Hubert Humphrey, I guess. So, I suppose, some of the theatrics are there. She just feels things very keenly, and deeply. And she emotes--just like I do.

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\*Judy Flander, "Helen Gahagan Douglas; A Critic Without Malice." Washington Star-News, 4 January, 1974.

Ingersoll: And gets these feelings over to other people.

Chavoor: Probably. I think so. It's good to talk to a more unbiased person than I am.

Introduction to Congress: Crossing the Country, Setting Up the Office

Ingersoll: You were so close though, Evie. There wasn't anybody else who was as close as you were.

What about that first time when she came to Congress? She won, you came back across the country with her then to Washington.

Chavoor: That's right. We drove with a friend--Yarmila Marton--who has now gone. Her husband's a producer in Hollywood. We were driving along, and I guess it was the second day out, or the third day. We would always get up very early in the morning because we tried to make time before the traffic came, and you have to remember that this is 1945--no, it was the end of 1944, we were trying to get there in time for the opening of the Congress of '45. Helen was in the back and I was driving with Yarmila next to me; I remember we put the early morning news on, and you know how they always do the ten best-dressed women in each field. So then they went down the line, and it was about five o'clock in the morning or something, and they said, "Helen Gahagan Douglas in public life" (or politics or whatever it was, I can't quite remember which one).

But the second day out as we were driving across the country, Helen had broken the cap of a tooth, and there was the stub right there in front of her mouth, down below, and every time she would smile there was this gap. We stopped and called the dentist in Los Angeles to prepare a cap and send it to her in Knoxville so that Helen's tooth could be fixed. At that time David Lilienthal was head of the TVA [Tennessee Valley Authority] and we were going to stop by there to see the TVA which was one of the wonders of the world.

I remember--I guess Yarmila was driving at that moment--I turned around and looked at Helen, and there she was in the back seat with terrible sloppy pants on, and some warm hose to keep herself warm, huddled in a blanket, her hair all streaming down. And as I say, it was about five o'clock in the morning, with this grin on her face, and there was the missing tooth. Well, we just screamed, and we said, "Gosh, if the photographers could see you now!"

Ingersoll: Was she on the list that year for the Ten Best-Dressed Women?

Chavoor: Yes. It had just been announced. She was one of the best-dressed in the field of politics, I think. I looked round and said, "Boy, if they could only see you now!"

Ingersoll: I bet that brought even more of a grin and more of a laugh to her face.

Chavoor: So there have been some great moments.

Ingersoll: How long did it take you to drive across the country at that time?

Chavoor: Well, we did stop to see the TVA, so we took an extra day. I don't know, it must have taken us four, five. I can't remember. Did we leave the day after Christmas? And we got there in time for the Congress to start. And we did spend a couple of days in Knoxville--we had to get the tooth fixed.

Ingersoll: Sure. [Laughter]

Do you think Helen felt very much apprehension about becoming a congresswoman?

Chavoor: I don't know. That's a question you're going to have to ask her. Someone is. I didn't sense it. To me she was dauntless.

Ingersoll: She became, what do they call it, the chairman or the president of her freshman class, I believe. Do you know how that came about?

Chavoor: I don't. Somebody else is going to tell you about that. There was a freshman class each time, just as there is now. She just sort of became the ringleader of it. I don't know, I can't remember.

Ingersoll: Who was responsible for getting her a house in Washington? Did she have to do that herself, or were you involved in that?

Chavoor: Well, we were lucky. Helen's sister, Lilli [Lillian] Gahagan, who now has gone, was an insurance broker in New York, and Helen has a brother named Walter Gahagan of the Gahagan Dredging Corporation of New York, so all of that was done for us. So when we arrived--

Ingersoll: You could go right in.

Chavoor: We didn't go right in. We had to stay at the Wardman Park Hotel, now the Sheraton Park. We stayed there two or three weeks or a month, I've forgotten. I think maybe it was several weeks, until we could take the house over. That was all arranged.



Ingersoll: That made it somewhat easier.

Chavoor: Oh yes. That was lovely.

Ingersoll: The children didn't come with you then.

Chavoor: No, the children came subsequently. I think maybe a month later or-- One was with Mother Gahagan, I think, and the other one was somewhere else. Anyway, they came later. I think I went to Chicago to meet Peter and came back. I can't remember. [Laughs]

Ingersoll: Maybe we can talk a little bit more about the household another time, but there are several things about the Congress, and now particularly the congressional office and its setup that I wanted to ask you about. What was the office like when it was first set up, in terms of who worked there?

Chavoor: I was there. And a person had been hired who had Hill experience. Lillian and Thomas Ford had told Helen when she was in Los Angeles that she needed to have someone who knew what was what in Washington, someone who had had Hill experience. And that made sense. Surely I didn't know anything. She was a woman by the name of Helen, too, whose last name escapes me. I don't want to say Helen Morgan, that's the singer. She arrived a few days later, and I'm trying to remember whether the other persons on the staff came the first day, or second day that I was there. Well, anyway, then we hired several other people. One was Mary Vance Wilson who had been with the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration--if I say UNRRA nobody knows what that is any more.

Ingersoll: It's much better to give the whole thing at this point. Mary Vance Wilson was somebody who came on the scene very early?

Chavoor: Yes, she had been with UNRRA, and she had also worked for Senator [John J.] Sparkman.

Ingersoll: What was Mary Vance Wilson to do?

Chavoor: We all did whatever there was to be done. There was no--

Ingersoll: Not a great division of labor?

Chavoor: No. There were telephones to be answered, there was mail to be answered, there were inquiries to be taken care of. There were cases and people with problems who had to be taken care of, and we all did what we had to do, that's all. We didn't stand on ceremony. They say this woman was in charge of the office.

Ingersoll: What's that Helen?

Chavoor: Her name was Helen; I can't think of her last name, isn't that disgusting?

Ingersoll: Maybe it will come to you before we're finished.

Chavoor: Anyway, she was there for about three months.

Ingersoll: And that didn't work out?

Chavoor: No.

Ingersoll: What was that story?

Chavoor: I don't know why it didn't work out. All I know is that Helen Douglas wasn't very happy about it, and she asked me one day as she was getting ready to go and make a speech some place what I thought. Although I sensed the office wasn't functioning as it should, I was reticent about expressing my true feelings on the matter--after all, who was I. I didn't know anything about Washington, it was a Washington scene. How was I to judge something about which I had no knowledge. Hadn't Lillian and Tom Ford told her it was necessary to have a person with Hill experience to run the office? She said that well, she didn't think it was working out and she didn't want her there anymore. Once Helen said that, I was released from hiding my true feelings. Not that I knew any more about Washington, it just was that the office wasn't functioning, and so she was terminated, and then I took over.

Ingersoll: I think you told me a story about how at that point the files were in a mess.

Chavoor: At that point nothing was organized, and nobody could find anything. Nothing had been filed. No system had been set up, and so when I became the head of the office it became my responsibility to get it organized. As I say, about three months had elapsed. I would do during the day whatever there was to be done, and I would stay at night and try to get caught up. Mary Vance was married, and there were others who would help as much as they could help, but this was my responsibility and my chore.

And I remember one night, coming home at whatever time it was. It was very, very late, and we lived on Bradley Lane, right behind the Chevy Chase Country Club, and once I had gotten off the bus, I had to walk. It wasn't a very long walk. It was no more than the equivalent of a full block or two, but there were no sidewalks as such, only gravel.

I was tired and my feet were hurting, and I came into the house, and I went upstairs and Helen was lying in bed reading some hearings or something. I went in and plunked myself down--there

Chavoor: was a settee, it was a large room. I was just kind of down, and she said, "What's the matter?" And I said, "I quit. I can't do it." With that the tears came to my eyes, and I was just sobbing. I said, "I'm tired, and it's all too much, and I can't do it. I quit. You can do whatever you want to do." And she said, "Well, if you quit, I quit!" I said, "That's a bunch of nonsense." She said, "Can't do it without you." I said, "That's crazy." I was sobbing, and so she said, "Well, you can always commit suicide." I said, "What." And she said, "You can always commit suicide." I stopped crying. I sat up with a start. I said it didn't make any sense; I didn't know what she was talking about.

Then she told me the story of how at the height of her theatrical career, when she could have had any part and any star, anything she wanted, she decided she was going to sing. I don't know what brought that all on in terms of her wanting to sing. She obviously had a voice, and her mother had a voice and never used it, she never trained it, but somebody prompted all this.

So, she took herself off to Europe and she was being trained by Madame Sophia Cehanovska, and she was going to give a concert and suddenly she couldn't sing. And she couldn't sing, and she couldn't sing. She thought, "My God, I can't sing." And the thing was that she was so petrified; here she was a top star in the theater and suddenly she was going out to sing. Suppose she was a failure? And then she thought, I don't have to be a failure, I can always commit suicide.

So that was what she was telling me. I didn't have to be a failure. And when I said, "I can't do it, I can't do it, it's just too much, I can't do it," I didn't have to be a failure, I could always commit suicide.

Ingersoll: There's always an alternative.

Chavoor: So, anyway, that's the story about that.

Ingersoll: And on you went.

Chavoor: Yes, I went on. [Laughter] I tell you, I was beaten, I hurt, I just ached all over, I hurt.

Ingersoll: You'd probably been working long hours at that point.

Chavoor: My feet hurt, and I was just crying, "What for? What's this all about? To hell with it all." [Laughs]

Ingersoll: You must have wondered where it was all going at that point.



Chavoor: I don't know what I wondered. I didn't think even beyond then, but I just knew that I had had it. You know, you have to remember that it wasn't just the office. I lived with the family, and that was my choice. There were the children, so I was up and running from the time I set my feet on the floor in the morning to the time that I went to bed; I learned a lot. It was the greatest time of my life, in terms of what it's done for me. I was in my twenties. I just blew up.

Ingersoll: Yes, with every good reason I would certainly think.

#### Staff and Advisers

Ingersoll: The office must have grown then through the years, didn't it?

Chavoor: Well, it grew. We didn't have much money, and we didn't have much room. At that time we were in the Rayburn--no, not the Rayburn Building, God help us--in the Cannon Building. There was Helen's office, and there was one office next door, and that was it. And that's all the members had. And so, there was Mary Vance, and Juanita came, and there was Walter Pick who's Helen's cousin.

Ingersoll: Did he work as a volunteer?

Chavoor: No. He worked as a volunteer part of the time, then he was on the payroll part of the time. And I was there, and then Volterine Bock came. Volterine had worked with Melvyn at the OCD [Office of Civilian Defense], as I recall. Anyway, she came and she worked part time. And then there was a gal by the name of Evelyn Press, as I recall her name. No, that's wrong, her first name was Evelyn--Brown. My memory's not so bad after all. So, I don't know whether all these people were there at the same time, or whether there were three or four or five, because that's how much room there was in the office. You couldn't put in any more desks.

Ingersoll: It was a fairly tiny space?

Chavoor: One office like this. And we had the files, and the bookshelves, and everything else. We had a good staff. It was fun. Everybody was great. They all helped.

Ingersoll: None of these people you mentioned had a particular job. They were all keeping going what needed to be going.

- Chavoor: Keep going what had to be done. Somebody handled the case work. See, right now the Congress is so structured. They have what they call legislative assistants who do nothing but legislative research. They have case workers--this is now a profession, where you have contact with the various agencies and you facilitate problems that your constituents have. Or take care of problems they might have. They have what they call administrative assistants, as they did in the Senate in the days when I was there. We didn't have administrative assistants at that time. You know, you were the head of the office, and so everybody did whatever had to be done.
- Ingersoll: Were there some people who came in to do special jobs like Jerome Spingarn, for instance, on foreign policy?
- Chavoor: Well, I guess, that's his field, and he came into the office. He was in the office, just like everybody else. He may have done this particular job for Helen, I can't recall. But he has been a continuing friend. Helen is the one who can remember these things better than I can.
- Ingersoll: What about Sidney Bercovici?
- Chavoor: She was Sidney Wilkinson at the time, and she worked in our office for a while. She, I think, started out being a lobbyist on the Fair Employment Practices Commission, because at that time that wasn't the law. There was an issue FEPC. Yes, Sidney was on our staff for a while. I know she was there in 1950, because when Juanita and I left to go to Los Angeles to work in the campaign, I think Sidney was there. In fact, I know she was.
- Ingersoll: Did she work in Helen's office on fair employment practices in any way?
- Chavoor: I can't tell you. Ask Juanita, she'll know. I can't remember.
- Ingersoll: Then Lucy Kramer Cohen came in to do special economic research, didn't she?
- Chavoor: Yes. She wrote a Market Basket speech. The famous one.
- Ingersoll: That must have been quite a thing to work on.
- Chavoor: That was when we were fighting--Helen was fighting--to keep price controls.
- Ingersoll: Particularly on rents at that point, wasn't it?

- Chavoor: Rents, yes. She demonstrated. So then this goes back to this business about her being theatrical, and using her theatrical background for things.
- Ingersoll: So she really made something vivid in the minds of the people she was trying to reach.
- Chavoor: And then, I think, subsequently, at the '48 convention, was it India Edwards who was then the vice-chairman of the Democratic National Committee? Didn't she do a Market Basket speech, that speech, that year?
- Ingersoll: Maybe she did, I'm not aware of that.
- Chavoor: I think so.
- Ingersoll: Then you had some volunteers who came in and worked, too, didn't you? Charles Hogan?
- Chavoor: Charles Hogan's a long-time friend of the Douglasses. He's a very learned man. He was most recently with the United Nations, and then he was with St. John's School. He's a very learned man. Everybody, no matter who was there, anybody who came around we'd put to work. [Laughs] Don Montgomery, who was with the United Automobile Workers, he would walk in to talk to Helen about something, and the next thing you knew Helen would have him doing something. Paul Sifton, the same way.
- Ingersoll: Who was Paul Sifton?
- Chavoor: He was with the United Automobile Workers. Great guy. A very delightful human being.
- Ingersoll: Would these people have been lobbyists?
- Chavoor: Yes. And they would come to explain something, or to--maybe there was some piece of legislation they wanted to discuss with her. And the next thing you'd know, she would have them doing something, or have them on a project. "I want to know about this-and-this-and-this; now you can do that for me, Paul. Now you go get it for me." And they did it.
- Ingersoll: And they would be working on something that they mutually believed in.
- Chavoor: Absolutely.
- Ingersoll: Did this happen with other people besides labor people, do you think?



Chavoor: This happened with everybody. It happened with Jim Newman.

Ingersoll: Who was Jim Newman?

Chavoor: James R. Newman. He wrote books on mathematics, he was a genius. He worked with Helen on the whole atomic energy bill. As a matter of fact, he helped write the law, if I recall correctly. He's now dead. Tragic, very young. Brilliant.

[end tape 2, side A; begin tape 2, side B]

Ingersoll: Jim Newman then came in to talk to Helen and then worked with her on the atomic energy issue?

Chavoor: He worked very closely on the atomic energy bill. On the whole issue.

Ingersoll: Was there anybody else whom you can think of who came in and worked for a certain thing?

Chavoor: Tex [Arthur] Goldschmidt at that time was--whatever his role was in the Department of the Interior, was he an assistant-secretary? Abe Fortas was under-secretary at the time. There would be power issues, there would be reclamation, water, and these were all people who were personal friends. And she would always be drawing on whatever talent she could get to sharpen her mind on whatever these issues were that she felt very keenly about. Everybody was always helping her.

Ingersoll: She seems that kind of a person.

Evelyn Chavoor's Roles: Office Manager, Mind Reader, Early Riser, Budgeteer of Tight Finances, Companion

Ingersoll: Tell me about your own responsibilities. Helen said one of the important things was correspondence. After she had drafted a letter you would take over on it. What does that mean really?

Chavoor: There were always issues, whatever came up in Congress. People started writing because of the things that she was interested in and was fighting for, and in most cases as the result of bills that had been introduced. There was always a prolific amount of correspondence, as there is now; and there is always that which is generated, and still is. And people had to be answered. Living with her and being as close to her as I was, I usually knew what her reactions and feelings were going to be on a particular piece of legislation, and just like in any other office we would draft a letter in reply and then we in the office would handle it.

Ingersoll: Was it difficult to keep up with the amount of that sort of thing that came up?

Chavoor: Yes it was. And, of course, she was known more than just through her district. I remember Ed Lybeck would always say—and properly so—when she would get an invitation to speak somewhere else, "That's interesting. How many votes are there in the fourteenth district for that?" [Laughter] "But, Ed, how are they going to know about the issues? We have to rally them around and everything." "How many votes in the fourteenth district?" Because his concern was getting her elected, and he had to be concerned, and she had to, too, if she were going to continue to do what she hoped to do. We worked hard.

Ingersoll: Was it hard to keep up with the amount of demand for her speaking that came along? Helen Douglas said that one thing you did was if you knew that she had no intention of leaving Washington at a certain time, you were the one who would take care of that.

Chavoor: I would do most of that. I would ask her; there were some I just knew automatically she could or could not do. I think this is true in most offices. I was with her every moment, and therefore you begin to—just like they say married people begin to look alike when they're together a long time. [Laughs]

Ingersoll: Juanita Terry Barbee said that her view of the time was that your feelings, your thoughts, were Helen's feelings and thoughts, and vice versa, which sort of ties in with what you were just saying.

Chavoor: Yes, I think that's so. It was fine, because Helen initiated me to politics, and I obviously had liberal feelings, just as she did. I couldn't have worked for her if I had not. It just wouldn't have worked, it would have been terrible. Maybe it just all stemmed from—goes right back to when I first started to work for them, and I took care of the children, and I was in the house, and although my role was that of a servant in the house, there was responsiveness, there was a cord, and this happened between us, and not only between her and me, but between Melvyn and me. And so, it's one of those—

Ingersoll: You almost became an extension of her in thought and feeling, and action then.

Chavoor: I guess I did. Not by design.

Ingersoll: Can you remember any of the special things that you worked on? Did you work on the brochure about the Negro soldier by any chance?

Chavoor: I worked on some of it, but Lorena Hickock, who used to be in the White House with Mrs. Roosevelt, worked on that a great deal. I worked on it to the extent that I was there, and there would be some nights I would be up typing. There is a copy of that in my things.

Ingersoll: Yes, in the things you gave me there is a copy of that.

What about the work on the Market Basket speech? Were you the ones who went on that shopping trip the day before?

Chavoor: I don't think so, I can't recall. I don't think I went on the shopping trip.

Ingersoll: Juanita Terry Barbee said that she went and that you went too. Can you recall it at all?

Chavoor: I don't think I went on that. There are just so many things you can do. And if Juanita remembers that she and I went, then-- Now that she refreshes my memory, that's probably what happened.

Ingersoll: Were you by any chance in the House the day Helen gave that Market Basket speech?

Chavoor: I don't remember. [Laughs] Probably not.

Ingersoll: You were probably tired from having worked on the whole thing.

Chavoor: I was probably in the office trying to take care of something. I can't remember.

Ingersoll: There are so many things that you do remember.

Tell me, you mention the intensity of the work at the time, especially when these special things, special speeches were coming along. You worked late at night. Did you also work sometimes in the mornings with Helen before you left the house for the office?

Chavoor: Yes. Sometimes we would get up early in the morning, before the children were awakened, and work. Many times we would work late at night. I recall one night when we were working very late--until the wee hours of the morning--there was a knock on the door. Helen answered. There stood police officers stating they saw the lights blazing and were just checking to see if everything was okay.

I'm trying to remember what speech it was we were working on, whether it was the Democratic Credo, or what speech it was. This had to be 1945-46 because we were then living in Chevy Chase,



Chavoor: and the children were there. Yes, but then you see from the moment I woke up in the morning I was on the move. Downstairs to fix the coffee, get upstairs and wake up the kids, awaken Helen, and we'd start. Yes, we worked hard, we worked long hours. We were very fortunate during one period when we had a housekeeper by the name of Elizabeth Swann. Another time we had a delightful person named Roxie Hines. Without them we never could have survived.

Ingersoll: Oh, that would make such a difference.

Chavoor: Roxie would come in after we had left and she would stay until Helen and I got home, even if we were going to be late. We'd say, "Whatever you fix for supper will be fine and that will be enough." And she would wait, and we would say, "Okay, now go." If we got home at nine o'clock for instance, she wouldn't go. She wouldn't go until she had served us dinner.

Ingersoll: Until she had taken care of you.

Chavoor: Yes.

Ingersoll: Oh, what a difference something like that could make.

Chavoor: We really were very fortunate.

Ingersoll: Can you describe the office at all, at one of these intense times. The time of the Market Basket speech, or something like that when there was just so much that had to be accurate. Was that a very intense time of work?

Chavoor: Yes, it was trying, and you're going to say, "You've got a love affair going on with Helen Gahagan Douglas," and I guess I have, in the right sense of the word, but when you meet her--you're going to, I hope--realize what I'm trying to say. She makes you want to do, and she is so generous and so terrific, and so great in terms of including you and making you a part of everything that is happening, that no matter how tense it gets, you extend yourself that extra foot, or yard or whatever it is. And you go that extra distance. Don't misunderstand me. There were times when I wanted to scream, and there were times when I wanted to shriek, and there were times when I did, because I was young. And there were times when I was so damn mad I could spit. But those were the rare ones. And there were times when I felt put upon. [Laughs]

Ingersoll: It seems very natural that you should.

Chavoor: But even so, even in spite of all that, when the chips were down she has always just had that way about her.

Ingersoll: Something that kept you going.

Chavoor: Keeps you going, and makes you want to go that extra distance. And, this is not only true of me, but of everybody else in the office. And also there was cooperation amongst the people, whether volunteers or the experts that came to offer their advice. These experts were all professional people who did this willingly and without any expectations of any reward, except the reward that maybe what they were fighting for, and working for, would reach fruition. And that's the greatest reward of all.

Ingersoll: I think you told me the story early in one of our conversations about a lobbyist who had walked into the office and felt there was such a different relationship between people in that office from others. Can you elaborate on that?

Chavoor: I'm trying to remember who it was, but I do remember the incident. He came in, and he said, "There's just such a wonderful feeling in this office of warmth, of feeling, of concern. I walk into other offices, and they're just cold. I really can feel the difference. I don't understand it." I said, "Well, it's very simple. If it were any different, we wouldn't be here. She wouldn't tolerate it." Her feeling is, there's not enough time for rank. There's not enough time for vying. There's not enough time for all this nit-picking, back-stabbing kind of thing. We've got too much work to do, and it creates a meanness with that kind of thing going on.

Ingersoll: A smallness.

Chavoor: Yes. And she can't work with that.

Ingersoll: There were so many things she had to do, which reminds me of another story you told me, of a night when you were coming back from a party with Helen, and LBJ [Lyndon Baines Johnson]. This must have been early in the congressional years, because I think you told me LBJ was giving Helen some advice on how to use her money.

Chavoor: We're talking about congressional money. The money she has for her office. Let me see. We were living on Thirty-Third Street, and we lived on Thirty-Third Street, '47-'48. I can place this because of the congressional years. Nineteen forty-five-nineteen forty-six was one Congress, '47-'48 another Congress, and '49-'50 we lived on Thirty-First Street.

We were coming home and Congress had been allocated additional funds, and this was to increase—it was going to be a salary increase, ostensibly. And I remember sitting in the back seat. I think LBJ was a congressman then—he may have been a Senator--



Chavoor: anyway, he was driving, and he was explaining to Helen about the allocation and that this could mean more help in the office by-- The system then--and I don't know whether it is still that way now or not--was that you were allocated a certain amount of money for salaries (a base amount), and each time there were to be adjustments or increases in salary, there would be increments on this base, as I recall. And so, his suggestion was, that we were all at \$2000 base, or \$1000, or \$3000 base, whatever it was, and then the increments were on top of that. If we lowered the base, then she would have that much additional money at the base to put on an additional person.

We were always short of help, we were always behind the eight ball. Helen turned around and said, "Evie, did you hear what Lyndon said? What do you think of that?" I didn't open my mouth. I was just sitting there and I was doing a slow burn. I still didn't say a word, and she said, "Evie, did you hear, don't you think that's a good idea? We can get an extra person in the office. You're all so busy, you're all so overworked. That will mean..." [Phone rings. Tape turned off]

And I just sat there and I was doing a slow burn. And she was right, we really needed extra help, and as she turned to face me, I knew I had to comment, and I said, "Well, knowing you, you'd put an extra person on the staff, and take on five more projects, like you always do." And I said, "And furthermore, that's a nice thought and I appreciate it all, the concern about our being overworked and everything, and we are, so because we're overworked we all deserve the salary increase, and that's what the money should be used for." With that she turned around, and not another word was said, and I think by that time we arrived at the house. I got out of the car and I fled into the house. [Laughs]

Ingersoll: What was done?

Chavoor: The money was allocated to the staff.

Ingersoll: And you got the increase.

Chavoor: Yes, we got the increase, whatever it was. When they were going through the whole thing recently about the increase for the congressmen, and they were retracing some of the raises that they had gotten, I remembered that when Helen went to Congress in 1945 she was earning \$12,000. No, it was only \$10,000. And that to me sounded like a lot of money then, of course.

Ingersoll: Then on top of that there was allowance for staff?

Chavoor: Yes, for staff.



Ingersoll: Which apparently never went far enough, when a person like Helen had so many things she wanted to do.

Chavoor: I suppose it was enough for some members who came from very safe districts, or who didn't do anything, or didn't matter. But we had the whole world at our office.

Ingersoll: You did. And there were so many interests, as you and I observed when we were looking through that Blue Book.\* Helen had so many things that she felt strongly about, didn't she?

Chavoor: Yes, and not only that, but she would get people in from every other state, and they would have a problem, or because of who she was, they wanted to have contact with her. Most people, I won't say all of them, usually take care of things in their district.

So, anyway, we did get some money. There was never money enough. And especially when Melvyn came back from the war, and he was in California and she was in Washington, and we had to try to juggle between the two households.

Ingersoll: That must have been terribly hard. Was that part of your job to help work out the economics of things?

Chavoor: Yes. Helen would say, fussing because the money wasn't going as far as it should be going, "We've got to cut back, we've got to cut back." And I'd say, "Umm-m-m." And in the next breath she'd turn around and say, "Make me a reservation, I'm going to California. I'm going to Los Angeles." And I would say, "But you've already gone as often as the budget will allow." Then she'd retort, "Don't try to run my life." And I would say, "Okay, okay."

And in those days a member would receive money enough to make one trip to Congress, and make one trip back to the district. There was none of this that they have now where they get X number of trips to their district, and a certain amount, or a number of trips. They even have allocation now for staff people for transportation. We never had that.

I remember during one of the campaigns there was some problem that arose amongst our campaign people, and Helen had to stay in Washington, and she kept fumbling around, and she said, "I know what, make a reservation and you're leaving on the next plane." I didn't have to pay for that, but Helen had to pay for it.

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\*The record of Helen Gahagan Douglas and Richard Nixon from the official Congressional Record, assembled by her campaign staff and dated August 20, 1950.

Ingersoll: Where would money for something like that come from?

Chavoor: I don't know, I suppose maybe some staffs had special funds like they have now. There's a big hue and cry about it now. We didn't.

Ingersoll: Would some of this have to come out of Helen's own personal purse, do you suppose?

Chavoor: Sure. You see, this is why in this day and age they talk about salaries, and of course with the inflation and everything, congressmen are making about \$44,500, and they're going to raise it \$12,000 or whatever it is. Everyone is shocked and amazed, and it does sound like a lot of money, and for the average worker in a district it's out of sight. But, I don't think people have any concept about the expenses that a member has. A group of constituents come, and if they get taken to lunch at the Senate dining room, and the Senator, or the Representative if it is in the House, picks up the tab, they just think, "Oh, well, this is the way you do it." It has to come out of somebody's pocket. The government doesn't pick up that tab, doesn't have an allocation for constituent entertainment.

Ingersoll: How did Helen manage something like this--constituent entertainment, do you think? Did that come up quite often?

Chavoor: Yes, sure, it did. There was a concept, too, that she had a lot of money, and it's true that she had been on the stage and Melvyn had been in the theater and on the stage, but during the war while he was away, his allotment went to his mother, and the steady flow of income from making pictures and so forth wasn't there--it was Helen's salary. I know we had rented the house. I'm just wondering, have I said any of this before?

Ingersoll: Not the sort of thing you're saying now, not about the economics part of it.

Chavoor: I know that the house in California had been rented to Maureen Sullivan, Mia Farrow's mother. Well, her father then too, he was alive. And I think the rent for that was \$1000 a month which seemed astronomical in 1945. But that \$1000 took care of the mortgage payments, took care of the gardener, and took care of the upkeep on the house.

Ingersoll: Not much more than that?

Chavoor: No, that's exactly what it took. We were living on whatever the income was that Helen was getting. It was no more difficult for her than it was for anybody else. I'm not trying to make a big thing out of it, except that she lived a different lifestyle.



Ingersoll: But it was still difficult.

Chavoor: Yes, it was. It was indeed. [Phone rings. Tape turned off]

Ingersoll: You said when we talked, before we started recording, that this job was all-consuming for you at the time, and sometimes people said later, "Evie Chavoor, you were really a slave in that job." How do you feel about that?

Chavoor: It's very interesting and amusing to me in a sense because this is much later. My close friends of those days, with whom I associate even now, and this has been a continuing relationship over the years, never said that to me during that period--at least I don't recall that they said that to me. Or if they felt any resentment about my being "used," they said nothing. And maybe it was the age that we were, in years, and maybe we didn't have the same kind of sense that we think we have now.

But I know in later years, after I came back to Washington, and Helen was gone, this has come up. And it never occurred to me then, and I laugh. I must have enjoyed it; I know it gave me something. And it was my whole life, and it was all-consuming, and I don't mean to say that there weren't moments when I didn't become angry, or that I didn't become upset, or that I didn't feel some emotional resentment, I'm sure I did. But they were passing, they were fleeting. It was not easy.

On the other hand, it's just like in this issue of the Washingtonian where they're talking about the "in" things, and the "in" people, and all of that. They come and they go. Well, it was during that era that Helen was part of Washington that was the "in" Washington people. They were the people in the administration, and they were the "in" thing. In my small way, although I was an appendage, I was vicariously experiencing all of this, and participating in it. So, whatever feelings I had of being upset about anything, the other experience far overshadowed those feelings.

Ingersoll: Yes, and you were very much in on not only the day-to-day working relationships as one of the "in" people, but on the outside, too, weren't you? The social life, this sort of thing.

Chavoor: Because I lived with Helen. You know how in proper society, and I don't know whether they do it in this day and age, they always put in the Green Book, or whatever it is, the husband, the wife, and the children, whether they're at home or at college, or whatever, or married; not that I was written up that way, but I was in the house.



Chavoor: I lived there, and I didn't live there as a servant. So, therefore, many times I would get invited, not to any of the official functions at the French Embassy for example, or to the White House, but amongst people who were officials in the officialdom of Washington and who were Helen's personal friends, outside of their relationship in official Washington. If she were invited they would invite me. And I would be there too. And conversely, when they came to the house, I was there. I didn't play a tremendous role or anything, but I was part of the group.

Ingersoll: It certainly made a full, interesting life, I should think.

Chavoor: Yes, it did.

#### Colleagues

Ingersoll: Tell me a little bit about the relationship with colleagues-- Helen's relationship with her colleagues. You mentioned that group who all had their offices along the corridor, that somebody had labelled "Red Gulch." Why did they call it that?

Chavoor: Well, because, I think in that year, I guess it was 1945, that whole corridor there, which was on a lower floor of the Cannon Building, included a number of liberal members of the House of Representatives. They were all Democrats. There was Clyde Doyle, and there was George Outland, and there was Ellis Patterson, and there was Hugh De Lacy, and there was Helen Gahagan Douglas. [Laughs] And there was also the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee office which was about two offices down from ours, where Cap Harding was. And somehow or other, it just got labeled that, because these were liberals.

Ingersoll: Did they talk a lot with Helen about things they all supported?

Chavoor: I think they did, but not any more so than they would with anybody else, except for George Outland who was right next door, and he was a good friend. There was always a lot of coming and going.

Ingersoll: Helen initiated quite a few pieces of legislation. Would these be people who would have supported her for the most part?

Chavoor: Oh, sure. She would go and corral them otherwise. [Laughs]

Ingersoll: And would they in turn go out and corral other people for her legislation, do you think?

- Chavoor: Possibly. Helen introduced bills comparable, similar, identical to many others that were introduced by other members of the House of Representatives, and as is the custom now, they would have co-sponsors, and many pieces of legislation that she introduced weren't unique, I don't think, except for the atomic energy bill, perhaps. They were the things that she believed in, and supported, as did many other people. And she would go out and lobby other members of Congress, just as they would come and try to get her to vote one way or the other on something. She had a good relationship with the other members, at least many of them.
- Ingersoll: You mentioned a few other people whom she had a particularly good relationship with. Could you say a little bit more about them? Andrew Biemiller?
- Chavoor: Well, Andrew Biemiller was a member of Congress. He was there during her first term. I think he was defeated in the next one; then he was back again. He's now the head of the Legislative Department of the AFL-CIO. He was George Meany's chief lobbyist, as they say, in the Wall Street Journal.
- Ingersoll: Then Claude Pepper was another one, wasn't he?
- Chavoor: Well, he was in the Senate at that time. He was a good friend. He had a very close relationship with Helen Fuller whom we talked about earlier.
- Ingersoll: Did he?
- Chavoor: She knew a lot of people because she was from the South.
- Ingersoll: Sam Rayburn had a great deal of respect for Helen, I think you mentioned.
- Chavoor: I think he did.
- Ingersoll: Can you remember any particular help that he as an older, stronger, person gave her at some time?
- Chavoor: I think the sad thing about this is that a lot of the anecdotes and everything, I just can't remember. I wonder if Helen isn't remembering them.
- Ingersoll: I think what we're trying to do is to try and triangulate in on these things, and some things she'll remember, some things you will remember. Maybe a name you mention will bring an anecdote to her mind.

Chavoor: True. But you see, Helen was a participant in the thing. I heard about it later on, and it didn't make the same impact on me as it did on her because she was in it.

Ingersoll: You mentioned Dick Bolling.

Chavoor: He was a young congressman there, too. But he's been there all these years. [Laughs]

Ingersoll: He was younger than Helen at the time?

Chavoor: I would imagine so. He must be sixty now, or in that area, and Helen is now seventy-five. So she was older than he. She is older than he, not was. She's still alive, thank God. Turn it off so that we don't waste the tape. [Tape turned off]

#### Helen Gahagan Douglas's Magnetism: Effect on Lobbyists and Colleagues

Ingersoll: The lobbyist and the pressure groups, we didn't get on tape last time. Let me just ask you again about a few like Alan Cranston.

Chavoor: He's now Senator from the state of California. When I first knew him, when he first came into Helen's office, he was working for the United World Federalists--a very admirable goal.

Ingersoll: Was he trying to get Helen to support some of his ideas?

Chavoor: Oh sure. That was the one worder, wasn't it? I haven't used that expression in a long time. Sure, he would come in and there was no problem as far as Helen was concerned.

Ingersoll: Was he one of the ones that she put to work when he came in?

Chavoor: No, not necessarily. No, I wouldn't say Alan was. He would be in and out. No. But anybody else was. [Laughs] People from the UAW [United Auto Workers] who would come in, whether it was Don Montgomery, or Leo Goodman, or Paul Sifton. These are all people who were with the UAW. Or whether it was any other person who was affiliated with any of the agencies. If it were something on power they would come in and they would be talking about a bill, or something or other, and the next thing you'd know she'd have them working up a speech or something. Or if it were social security, Elizabeth Wickenden who is the expert in that whole area, would be in there doing a job. And I remember one day, I think Don Montgomery had walked into the office, and I guess



- Chavoor: it was on the housing legislation, and he came to tell her something, and he walked out of the office shaking his head because she had dragged him in and talked to him about something, and said, "Okay, Don, put this together and put that together." And they did it gladly.
- Ingersoll: She must really have had a special knack in getting people to give the time and the know-how that they had.
- Chavoor: Well, you have to know, and everybody has to remember, I actually remember, that she was dynamic, and dedicated, and she was beautiful, and that she had fought the fight before she came to Congress on many of these issues in California. And they knew it. And they knew she was a fighter. So, it was a kind of a quid pro quo. But because of her personality, her dynamism, she was magnetic. She would walk into a room and she just overwhelmed the room.
- Ingersoll: What a person! In connection with colleagues. Colleagues sometimes would be against the things that she was for. What was she like when there were obstacles in her way? To something like rent control, or irrigation beyond the 160-acre limit, and that sort of thing. Things that she wanted so much, but that others of her colleagues would fight against. What was her approach?
- Chavoor: She just had one goal, and her colleagues might fight it, fine, they were entitled to their opinions, entitled to do whatever they wanted to do. She would just go and try and work on them, get more support for what she believed in, that's all. There wasn't any feeling of acrimony, or anything. She had to do what she had to do, and that's that.
- Ingersoll: Did she ever have a feeling that people were benighted when they didn't believe in these things that seemed so obviously right to her, do you think?
- Chavoor: I don't think so. No. Her mind just doesn't work in those terms. She just had to do what she had to do, and she would go and try and convince somebody, and try to persuade them, but if it didn't work she would go someplace else.
- Ingersoll: And simply keep fighting on.
- Chavoor: Yes. Exactly. It was just like she was a migrant. I remember when the migrants were being shunted from one county line to another, because they had diseased eyes, and they had pelagra, and no county wanted to be responsible for them. This was before they got assistance from the federal government. And they would be going from one county line to another, and she just went in and fought every county sheriff.

Ingersoll: So, she had a long history of this kind of thing.

Chavoor: Yes. "They're not going to stay in my county, put them on the other line." And she just went down there and fought them. Physically she was right there.

Ingersoll: I thought it was very interesting that an article in the Washington Post, and another in the Washington Star [January 4, 1974], from some years later, long after the Nixon-Douglas campaign, said that when she came back and spoke to a Washington group years later, she showed anger, but no malice.

Chavoor: That's right. That was a beautiful--

Ingersoll: I thought that was such an interesting--

Chavoor: And both of these papers, both reporters came out of that having gotten the same impression. It wasn't just a one-sided thing by one reporter. And it's true. This is typical of her--throughout, everything I can remember. There wasn't room for that kind of thing. There was too much to be done, and there wasn't time. You didn't. If you were going to spin your wheels with anger and malice and hate, forget it.

Ingersoll: You mentioned that one of the things that got people sometimes to work with her, was her beauty. But Juanita Terry felt that sometimes people in Congress, her colleagues, didn't take her seriously because she was such a beautiful woman. Were you at all aware of anything like this going on?

Chavoor: It didn't make an impression on me, but there may be some validity to it. I don't know whether it was because she was beautiful, or maybe they didn't take her seriously because they figured she was an actress, or had been an actress. Still was an actress. [Laughs] You see, Juanita got a different impression, would get another perspective. I think maybe I was too close to it. That kind of interpretation would have to come from somebody like Juanita, or from her colleagues themselves.

[Interview 3: February 6, 1977]  
[begin tape 3, side A]

Ingersoll: Helen Douglas said that when labor issues came up in legislation, she might talk to someone she trusted on the Labor Committee, or in the labor unions. You've mentioned some of these people. Can you think of others?

Chavoor: These were people she knew were excellent on these matters, and whom she trusted.

Ingersoll: How about Evelyn Dubrow, was she one of the--

Chavoor: Oh sure, with the ILGWU, International Ladies' Garment Workers Union. I know all these people now and their affiliations, who were there. Times have changed. People have changed in those particular jobs. For a long time Esther Peterson, who is now the consumer representative, or the consumer advocate with Giant, was the lobbyist for the Amalgamated Clothing Workers' Union.

Ingersoll: Oh, she was?

Chavoor: She was long affiliated with the AFL-CIO.

Ingersoll: And did Helen talk to her on occasions about labor policies that she needed to know more about?

Chavoor: Sure. When a bill came up, the whole labor community would be interested in it. It was not a particular union's problem, it was everyone's problem, whether it was in the construction industry, or whatever. And you know labor has their positions on everything. As everybody does. [Laughs]

#### Pressure Groups and Special Interests: Longshoremen, Atomic Scientists

Ingersoll: Were you in the office very often when individuals or groups of people whom Helen says were waiting there at the end of the day, were there to talk to her about legislation? Can you remember any of those particular incidents?

Chavoor: I was always there, and there were always people there. She used to be walking down the hall and I could hear her footsteps coming from the floor of the Congress, and I'd say, "Okay, kids, here she comes." [Laughs]

Ingersoll: Would there sometimes be more than one group of people waiting to see her to talk about one thing or another?

Chavoor: We were always there very late.

Ingersoll: How late would you work in the evenings?

Chavoor: Six, seven, eight, nine.

Ingersoll: That would be a normal time, six, seven, eight, nine, until whoever wanted to talk to her had finished.



- Chavoor: I don't know whether it would happen all the time; it didn't happen every day, but we never got out of there before six or seven. I can't remember that we ever did. Most of the time it was later.
- Ingersoll: Do you remember the time Harry Bridges and his longshoremen came in?
- Chavoor: Yes, I do remember that, but I don't remember the conversation because I was not in the room, I was in the outer office.
- Ingersoll: Was it a large group?
- Chavoor: I've forgotten how many there were, but there were several of them, and I don't mean two or three. Whether there were four, five or six, I don't know. Evidently he had come in, wanted Helen to vote a certain way, or change her vote in a certain way, and she said that was her position and that was it. And I think he indicated to her that she might be having some difficulty if she didn't toe the mark. You never say things like that to her, because she couldn't care less. [Laughs]
- Ingersoll: What would be a normal reaction of Helen's to something like that, would you think?
- Chavoor: She'd just tell them bluntly how she felt, and that was it. It didn't make any difference what they said, or how. And when they might have threatened, I think after she had said her piece, I think she escorted them to the door.
- Ingersoll: Do you remember any other pressure groups who either came personally or sent letters concerned with offshore oil, or farm labor, or atomic energy, or any of those issues that were so important?
- Chavoor: Well, with the atomic energy we had a whole group of atomic scientists functioning out of her office on that bill for the civilian control of atomic energy. Helen's office became the rallying point for that. That was kind of fun.
- Ingersoll: Oh, it must have been. And the atomic scientists came into the office?
- Chavoor: Yes. Let me see if I can recall how the whole thing got started. I know that a bill had been introduced, I think it was H.R. 1. It was referred to as the May bill. Andrew May was a congressman from Kentucky and was the chairman of the Military Affairs Committee in the House. This was not long after the Japanese surrender. The bomb had been dropped on Hiroshima. Helen was made aware that a bill had been introduced and reported, without public hearings,

Chavoor: which would put the control of atomic energy in the hands of the military. I believe it was Bob Lamb of the Steelworkers Union who told her this.

Helen immediately sent for a copy of the bill. After reading it, she became concerned that a matter of such far-reaching importance as the development of atomic power should not be determined in secret. She conferred with her brother in New York and other lawyers who agreed with her conclusion. Helen proceeded to contact key newspapers throughout the country, advising them of the bill. She sent each a copy of the bill and if after reading it, they agreed with her that the bill must be recalled and public hearings held, would they publicize what had transpired. The response of the national press was successful in forcing the committee to recall the bill and hold open hearings. Suddenly, the whole fight evolved and exploded over military control versus civilian control of atomic energy.

Ingersoll: The May bill would have put the military in control, wouldn't it?

Chavoor: Oh, yes, absolutely.

Ingersoll: Which Helen was very much against.

Chavoor: Against. And from that evolved all the activity. I remember our going day and night. The two rooms of our office just a hubbub of activity, sending out telegrams--just like when you are trying to stop a piece of bad legislation, or to gain support for a good piece of legislation, alerting the people in the United States.

Ingersoll: Did a great deal of literature go out from your office then?

Chavoor: Yes, from our office, and the long distance telephone bill was astronomical. [Laughs] We had lists of businesses, and all the members of the scientific community in all the universities and colleges. We were ringing the clarion bell of Paul Revere.

Ingersoll: Did she get a good response from the scientific community?

Chavoor: Oh, yes. Oh, sure. And we have civilian control of atomic energy. Now the bill is called the McMahon bill but we refer to it as the McMahon-Douglas bill. Senator Brien McMahon was the Senator from Connecticut who introduced the bill in the Senate and led the fight there. It was his bill that passed the Senate and came before the House. Helen had introduced her own bill in the House. But I am convinced, and I know this because of my own participation in it, that if Helen had not started the whole ruckus going, it just never would have happened. Helen learned later that the supporters of the May bill hoped it would pass

Chavoor: Congress under a number, without debate. Usually, and on very rare occasions, when a bill comes through like that, from the president, you do not question it, and especially when it deals with such a hush-hush, secret matter as the atomic bomb, as it was then.

Now historians may not give her credit for it. But I know that James R. Newman, who helped draft the bill placing atomic energy under civilian control, was in our office constantly. Jim Newman served as head of the Science Division of the Office of War Mobilization and Reconversion, and acted as White House adviser on science and atomic energy legislation. He was appointed counsel to the Senate Special Committee on Atomic Energy and served in that capacity during the long months of hearings. He was in and out of our office all the time. And that was one of Helen's real accomplishments as far as I'm concerned.

Ingersoll: It certainly was.

Chavoor: And you know, she won't go down in history with "this is the Douglas Bill" or with some fantastic piece of legislation passed with her name on it. However, Jim Newman and Byron S. Miller dedicated their book, The Control of Energy, to Senator McMahon and Helen as "two of the people's representatives who saw far and saw clearly." She was there only a short while--six years is nothing to make that kind of impact, where you have a bill named after you and it's your bill. But in terms of getting people to rally around and participate and work, to make democracy count, she did that. And would have continued to do it if she had not been defeated.

#### Experts, Advisers, and Friends

Ingersoll: In something as new and difficult to understand as atomic energy, how did she learn what she needed to know and how did she help others whom she wanted to convince, learn what they needed to know?

Chavoor: Well, she is a voracious reader for one thing, and the minute she got on to this whole thing, she had to learn everything there was to learn about atomic energy. Jim Newman arranged for the physicists to come to Washington to talk with key Senators and members of the House. Helen would have small groups of House and Senate members to her home for dinner and have one of the physicists explain the implications of atomic energy. If I recall correctly, Leo Szilard was one of the physicists who was there, and Enrico Fermi, too.



Ingersoll: What a difference that push that she made really did make, didn't it? Tremendous difference it seems.

That brings us to another question, how she used experts. You mentioned how she used Szilard and Fermi to help educate herself and others in Congress. Who were some of the other experts whom she used on other matters? I think you suggested that Harold Ickes was somebody whom she used.

Chavoor: Harold Ickes, yes. Harold Ickes she knew before she came to Congress. You have to remember that she was state vice-chairman and national committeewoman, and she was very active in affairs that were not confined to the state. There were national affairs, for instance the migrant thing which brought her into contact with people like Ickes who then was the secretary of the interior.

Ingersoll: It would have been through the migrants that she first met many of these people.

Chavoor: Yes. But then she had been to the White House and was a friend of the Roosevelts, so Ickes and other people were very good friends of hers. She had contact with them before she came to Congress and then when she came to Washington, it was simply a continuation and closer association.

Ingersoll: Was Jerome Spingarn another of the advisers who helped?

Chavoor: Yes. He was in and out of the office.

Ingersoll: He was in foreign affairs, wasn't he?

Chavoor: Yes, in foreign affairs. I don't know what his official role was, I can't recall. All I can recall is that Jerry was always there. Jerry's always been a part of everything. Now Helen could probably remember better.

Ingersoll: He's a person I would like to contact now.

Chavoor: Yes, he's here in Washington.

Ingersoll: You mentioned a Rachel Bell to me.

Chavoor: Rachel Bell, her husband--I can't say what her husband's role was, he's now gone, but he was involved in foreign affairs, and probably he was in the State Department. Maybe you'll want to talk with Rachel.\* But Rachel also was knowledgeable on issues,

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\*Rachel Bell, "Helen Gahagan Douglas and Foreign Policy," an oral history conducted 1977, in "Helen Gahagan Douglas, Volume II: The Congress Years, 1944-1950," Regional Oral History Office, University of California, Berkeley, 1981.

- Chavoor: was a person who rallied supporters on bills--whether it was Bretton Woods, or reciprocal trade agreements, or whatever issue it might have been.
- Ingersoll: Was she connected with foreign affairs?
- Chavoor: She had no official role, but she had an unofficial role in disseminating foreign affairs information, I guess. She would always stimulate a citizens group to organize on a particular issue. In the area of foreign affairs, or any of these things, Rachel Bell would be the catalyst, or one of them. She might be a fun person for you to talk to.
- Ingersoll: I think she might be a good one. And then we'd like to talk a little bit about the role of her friends--people like Helen Fuller.
- Chavoor: Okay. But you know who she is, or who she was.
- Ingersoll: Yes, sure, the political editor of the New Republic, while Helen Douglas was in Congress.
- Chavoor: She was a brilliant person, I think--a real brainy gal. And, because of her role as editor of the New Republic, she had contact and knew I would say almost everybody who was anybody in officialdom in Washington during that period. In addition to that, she knew members of the Supreme Court. She had a keen analytical mind, she was a good prober, and she and Helen became very good friends. And I think one of the things about her was that she was very imaginative--could be a fey kind of a person.
- She had a terrific sense of humor, and was liked, and yet could go in depth on anything of world-shaking importance. And because of her knowledge and her ability, she was a great asset. Her relationship with Helen was not one because she was an asset; it was because they just became good friends, and there was a rapport, and it was a release valve.
- Ingersoll: Do you think she influenced Helen's ideas very much--influenced the way she thought and perhaps voted on issues?
- Chavoor: I don't know. They complemented each other, and I don't think there was anything they might have disagreed on.
- Ingersoll: More likely they would have been in agreement on things?
- Chavoor: Right. I think Helen might have spoken with her in terms of tactics, or strategy, and this kind of thing. And I suppose those of us who are involved in politics, or who were involved

Chavoor: in politics--and some of my friends still are--were sort of inbred, and I think this is something that's been said about us before; so that your whole thrust is not politics per se, although some people would call it just politics, it's government, and what happens. I feel so keenly that what happens in government affects our daily lives, even if people want to shunt it off and say, "Oh, you're in politics--politics, government and bureaucracy." What they do up there affects you and me, and everything we do every single day.

Ingersoll: Of course.

Chavoor: And therefore--I've thought about this a number of times--we were embroiled in it: it was our whole thrust, our consciousness. I remember when we used to go out to Rappahannock County, in the country, with Helen Fuller, to Jasmine Hill, a huge, fabulous house owned by Charles and Claudia Marsh with whom Helen Fuller was very close.

This would be our relaxation to clear the cobwebs out of our brains, and yet off and on, whether we were playing bridge, or whether we were just basking in the sun, or whether we were taking a hike down the country road, the conversation would be interwoven with what was happening here, and there, and what maneuverings, machinations were going on. And in this sense, besides what I mentioned before about being a release valve in terms of the sense of humor and lightness, the relationship between Helen and Helen existed.

Ingersoll: Would you think then that Helen Fuller taught Helen Douglas, relative newcomer to the Washington scene, something about how personalities interacted, who was whom, and this sort of thing on the Washington scene?

Chavoor: I don't know whether she taught her, she may have. Helen was pretty hep when she came, except she wasn't hep about--

Ingersoll: About what?

Chavoor: Oh, well, as far as the House was concerned, about the inner workings and about who gets what rooms, and all of that. I don't think she could be bothered with all that jazz--whether somebody is going to get a better space, or better room.

Ingersoll: That didn't matter?

Chavoor: It didn't matter to her, and she was pretty naive about those kinds of things. I must say I was, too.



Ingersoll: But they must have somehow got worked out.

Chavoor: The room was assigned to us when we got there, that was it. And we stayed there. We were perfectly happy. It never occurred to us that we wanted to get a better room, or anything like that, and I think some of the members whom she knew who liked her, would say, "Hey, Helen, why don't you ask for this, why don't you do that?" They kind of protected her, and shepherded her. But I've gotten afield.

Ingersoll: We were talking about the friends, and what influence they had on her thinking and feeling and that sort of thing. Was Abe Fortas among the group of friends, would you say?

Chavoor: Yes, he was a good friend.

Ingersoll: The sort of friend who'd come to dinner--

Chavoor: Yes. Or she would go there. He was under-secretary of the interior I think at that time. At one point he was. Then he may have gone into his law practice. They were counselors and advisers.

Ingersoll: Was Alan Barth?

Chavoor: Alan Barth was one of those. He was a good friend. He's now retired, I think, from the Washington Post.

Ingersoll: Oh, he was on the Washington Post at the time?

Chavoor: Yes, one of the bright people on the editorial staff. And he's written a couple of books.

Ingersoll: And he was a Nieman Fellow, too, wasn't he?

Chavoor: Yes, he was a Nieman Fellow, too. [Phone rings. Tape turned off]

Ingersoll: I'll ask Rachel Bell about Alan Barth.

Chavoor: She probably has his books in her library; in fact, I'm sure she has.

Ingersoll: What about Mary and Leon Kyserling? They were friends of that period, weren't they?

Chavoor: Yes, and are still today. At one point or another I think everyone who was official Washington was in and out of the office, or was with Helen someplace, somewhere. People gravitated to her office, to her. She was unique. Is, stop saying "was!"

## Communication with Constituents

Ingersoll: Tell me a little bit about her congressional style. In that box of materials that you gave me, it seemed that there were quite a few things that could be called "educational materials." And as you say, there were a great many things that she sent out, about atomic energy, for instance. Do you have the feeling that the educational role was one that she felt was seriously hers as a congressperson?

Chavoor: I don't know whether she thought it was seriously hers, except I know that during the 1950 campaign she felt that she was going to educate the whole state of California about the water resources of California, and the 160-acre limitation, and what was being done to destroy it. And she would stand there in the sun by the hour and talk about the water, and I would say, "Helen, for God's sake, that's enough." But I don't know whether she felt that way or not.

I think the materials to which you're referring are speeches she made and things that she had put in the Congressional Record, and she would send them out to her constituents, which is a common practice, and which she didn't do a heck of a lot. Every now and then on some key issue that she felt was important, and in order to communicate with the constituents, she'd use that method. She had a terrific constituency too.

Ingersoll: Terrific in what respect?

Chavoor: It was a Democratic district, and the majority loved her, even if they disagreed with her at times. I remember even when someone would write to her on the opposite side of an issue, she would sit down and say to that person why she felt as she did about a particular issue, and send the letter saying, "I appreciate your interest, thank you for writing."

I remember one day when I was in Los Angeles, and I was going up to Helen's house--I don't know whether this was in 1950, or when it was--I had taken a bus, intending to take a cab to go from the end of the bus line up to Senalda Road. There is a church on the corner there, and someone picked me up and drove me up to the house. I think it was a friend of a friend of mine, and he wanted to know where I was going. When I told him, we got talking about Helen Douglas, and he said, "You know, I wrote her a letter, and I told her I was opposed to certain things, and she wrote me back. She told me all the reasons why she was for it. I never got a letter like that before."

Ingersoll: What a really frank stand that was. Did she do this sort of thing very often when she wrote letters back to constituents--say very frankly how she stood on an issue when the constituent took a different stand?

Chavoor: I think it was pretty common knowledge where she stood on issues, or it would soon become common knowledge. Sometimes when she had not formulated an opinion yet on a particular issue, or a bill, or she was waiting for the hearings to evolve, so that from the hearings she might be able to arrive at a conclusion, and if we got masses of mail on something, why we would say that she hadn't decided yet, but would decide as soon as the hearings were held. Or if she already had a firm position on a bill, she would write and explain why she felt a certain way. Sometimes it worked, sometimes it didn't. I know that she could have been elected from her district ad infinitum if she had not run for the Senate. But that's another story, you know. Who knows what might have been?

#### A Woman's Approach?

Ingersoll: Surely. Do you feel that on many issues she took a woman's approach? As I was looking through some of the speeches and material that you gave me, it seemed that quite often there were idioms that were a woman's idioms, perhaps. There was a very beautiful speech entitled "The Human Budget Must be Balanced for Peace." It was one she gave July 1946, just before her colleagues went back home to campaign. And she urged them to cast their stands by the fundamental question "Will it help or harm the making of real peace within our nation or among nations?"

And her imagery was very often centered on homes and children. She'd say, "Are bigger profits, higher wages and new washing machines, two chickens in every pot, lower taxes, our innermost yearning as we bend over our children and think of the years ahead?" Or this statement, "For each of us who sometimes must meet a child's trusting eyes, every act must fit into a pattern that permits of a future." Do you think that she had a distinctive woman's approach?

Chavoor: I think she's going to have to answer that because I attributed it to just being a human approach. Now maybe women have something biological in their makeup that makes them think differently, or react differently. That's very interesting. Helen never expected to have any children, and never anticipated being married.

Ingersoll: Oh, really?



Chavoor: Oh, yes. She was going to have a theater. It's interesting that she should speak in this fashion. I suppose some people would interpret that as a woman's approach. But the men talk about "looking into children's eyes," and "for our children, and our grandchildren's sake," at the end of every speech. I don't know, you'll have to ask her.

She just cares about people. I don't think this is unique in a woman. I don't know. I keep thinking right now about Hubert Humphrey, who over the years has been champion of all the things that we all believe in, and the language that he uses, and the way he speaks for peace. I don't know, maybe this is something in terms of a woman. It's a special thing, there's a special aura about it.

Ingersoll: You feel Hubert Humphrey could use some of the same kind of imagery?

Chavoor: I think he has that same kind of imagery. He fights for the things that Helen has always supported, and I was just trying to understand the difference between a man and a woman kind of thing.

Ingersoll: But maybe it is more the difference between kinds of people, and what they put their primary focus on, rather than between a man and a woman. It's hard to say.

Chavoor: Yes, I suppose someone could come to that conclusion in terms of Helen, and the woman's approach. Peace, rent control, prices. these things that are particularly tied in with a woman and not anybody else?

Ingersoll: Not particularly, and certainly a lot of her imagery had not only these things of children and things in the home, but when she got into foreign affairs, and so forth, there was a rich imagery which drew from so many, many different sources, I suppose.

Chavoor: I don't know. Maybe there is some validity to what you say.

#### Social Life

Ingersoll: What was your social life like in those days? Were there things that you did for relaxation sometimes?

Chavoor: We'd play bridge. [Laughs] Whenever we could. Some of our friends looked upon that with disdain. I recall one night we came home and Helen said, "Gee, maybe we can get a bridge game going." And I said, "Okay." I've forgotten whether I called Tex and

- Chavoor: Wicki Goldschmidt or whom I called, and they said, "Bridge!" Just as if, how could you talk about bridge? Mary Vance Wilson who was in our office played bridge, and I think Juanita played bridge. A few of our friends would play bridge. So that was our relaxation.
- Ingersoll: This was certainly a way you could keep your minds on something quite different from what was normally either--
- Chavoor: Somebody would say to me, "Jeepers, you have to keep taxing your brain. You have to remember everything." I'd say, "Oh, but it's bliss." I'd forget about the unanswered mail, or fifty-seven other problems in the district. You just blot everything else out.
- Ingersoll: Anything else that you did for pleasure in those days, as relaxation?
- Chavoor: Helen went out to dinner, and things like that. I'm just trying to remember.
- Ingersoll: Did you ever go to the theater?
- Chavoor: I remember once during the time that Helen was in Congress. Mel opened in a play in Philadelphia--or was he producing a play? And we all went up--when I say "we," there was a whole entourage of people who went up on the train. I'm trying to remember. I used to go out on a date every once in a while, and I had some friends that I used to see occasionally.
- Ingersoll: Did you have a group of friends that were separate from Helen's friends?
- Chavoor: Oh yes. The same friends I have today. Yes, I had a group of friends. And if Helen were away and I was there with the children, they would come over.
- Ingersoll: Were they generally a younger group of friends?
- Chavoor: They were contemporaries of mine. They'd come over for dinner, we'd go to a movie, or we'd--I'd go to their house for dinner, their houses.
- Ingersoll: I think you mentioned that there were times when you played charades. This was something that Helen found relaxing.
- Chavoor: Oh, sure, we'd do that when we had dinner parties. We'd finally get talked out, so we'd play charades.
- Ingersoll: Oh, fun! And that would be something that would be a natural for Helen, I imagine with her theatrical background, wouldn't it?

Chavoor: That was a natural for me too, because I'm a big ham. [Laughter]

Ingersoll: I suppose it might be for many people on the Washington scene. Did this happen very often?

Chavoor: Not an awful lot. It happened. Helen was off making speeches a lot of the time, too. After Melvyn came back from the war, she would go out to California, and especially after the children returned to Los Angeles.

#### Family Life in Washington

Ingersoll: Let's talk a little bit about this family life, and the problem of somebody having to look after a family and still have this very intensive professional life to live. What sort of person was Mel in his early years--during Helen's pre-Congress years? During those congressional years?

Chavoor: Well, you have to remember that I first knew them when I was--as I mentioned--the nursemaid in the house. And so my perspective was dimmed in terms of--I was seventeen, eighteen years old, I guess. Eighteen, nineteen, whatever. I remember they would be going out to dinner, and they would be all dressed, and Helen would come sweeping down the stairs all dressed up, and I would look up at this glorious, beautiful human being, and be--

Ingersoll: Rather awestruck?

Chavoor: Yes. And given my family background, and the way I was raised, and everything, this was all, as I say, another world. And then I would just look up, and just as you say, be awestruck by it all.

Ingersoll: I understand that Alis De Sola--one of Helen's Barnard school chums--said that Melvyn reminded her of a prophet sometimes. He was like a man who has God in him but doesn't believe in God. Does that make sense to you?

Chavoor: I think this is her perspective, in later years. I could agree with that. This is the Melvyn Douglas now, in later years, not the Melvyn that I knew initially, because he was then a Hollywood screen star.

Ingersoll: Did he have strong feelings about things, even then, would you say?



- Chavoor: Yes, I would say so. I think that it was during those years that they started the Hollywood Democratic Committee. This was a result of the fact that the studios (I think he was with Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer at the time) where he was under contract would just arbitrarily allocate so much money for the Republican party, and they had no say about it, so they started the Hollywood Democratic Committee. Phil Dunn and a group of them organized to do things for the Democratic party. So I would say, yes--that he had strong feelings then.
- Ingersoll: Did Helen and he often disagree about things?
- Chavoor: I can't speak of that because I don't know. I don't think there was much disagreement. I think there was a lot of give-and-take. Helen at that time was mostly concerned with her own career. She had studied opera, and was pursuing that.
- [end tape 3, side A; begin tape 3, side B]
- Ingersoll: Was Melvyn active in the '48 or '50 campaign?
- Chavoor: Not in the '50 campaign, as I recall, because he was not there--he was involved in doing a play. That I remember. Now, he was there part of the time, but towards the end of the campaign he was not there. I was sleeping in his bed! [Laughter] His bedroom was my workshop.
- Ingersoll: The '48 campaign, do you think he--can you remember in any way that he campaigned?
- Chavoor: I can't remember. Isn't that pathetic!
- Ingersoll: Of course, he had many things to do himself, I'm sure.
- Chavoor: I'm trying to remember in '48. [Tape turned off]
- Ingersoll: Do you think Melvyn ever wanted Helen to stop being a congresswoman and come home?
- Chavoor: I don't know for a fact, because he never expressed it in my presence, and I don't know what he thought. I would doubt it.
- Ingersoll: It wouldn't have been in character, you think?

Chavoor: No, it wouldn't have been in character. And, I'm sure he probably was very proud of her. And if she had become United States Senator, why, I guess that would have been okay too. See, when I did the interview for Melvyn--for the University of Indiana--there were just big gaps, because I just didn't--

Ingersoll: Surely. You were closer to Helen.

Chavoor: And I just wasn't that much involved. I couldn't be. I was here and he was there. I just can't remember that '48 campaign. Maybe if I read through some things it will come back to me, or if I go through this Blue Book.

Ingersoll: Yes. Well, let's leave that and if you think of anything else we can put it in along the way. Let's talk about the children just a little bit. What were your responsibilities in the Washington household? Was there always a housekeeper there? Or during those first years was there no housekeeper?

Chavoor: No. There was a housekeeper. We had a housekeeper on Bradley Lane. I'm trying to remember if we had a housekeeper on Thirty-Third Street. Sure, at least somebody would come in, and then fix dinner, and when we had a dinner party there would always be somebody there. The children, of course, weren't there, and I remember Helen's mother and Melvyn's mother, both visited us in that house on Thirty-Third Street. That I remember.

Ingersoll: Was life easier or harder when her mother-in-law was there?

Chavoor: Oh, well. Maybe it was harder in the sense that you have to prepare and provide, and so forth. But the children weren't there, and so it was different. When the children were there, during that--

Ingersoll: Oh, this was before the children came?

Chavoor: Yes. No, no, no. The children were there the first two years, the first Congress. And the mother-in-law came on a visit, Helen's mother and Melvyn's mother, during the second Congress. But during the time that the children were there, we had housekeepers. We had two beautiful housekeepers. This was on the tape from last time.

Ingersoll: Yes, you did mention the housekeepers on the tape last time.

Chavoor: And we had some merry times. [Laughs] Peter was something else again.

Ingersoll: Would he often get into escapades?

Chavoor: He'd get into mischief. I remember one time Helen had gone off somewhere to make a speech, and the children had been fed. But then Peter went off somewhere with his buddies, or something, and the time kept going on, it got to be ten o'clock, it got to be eleven o'clock, it got to be twelve o'clock, and I was getting frantic. I started pacing up and down. I thought, "What will I do? What'll I do?" And I thought, "Maybe I'll call the police. Maybe they would find him, maybe something's happened to him." And I thought, "No, I can't call the police. Then there'll be a big headline in the paper."

Ingersoll: Yes, you have to be so much more careful when you're a public figure.

Chavoor: Well, not only that. People reading the paper might wonder where she was--off making a speech?

About two o'clock in the morning he came wandering in. I was just absolutely beside myself. "Where've you been?" "Well, I was with my buddies." I said, "What buddies?" The NIH [National Institute of Health] and the Naval Hospital installation weren't too terribly far from where we were. Well, it was far enough, but anyway, from Chevy Chase to Bethesda. And he says, "I was having a beer with my buddies." I said, "Your what?" He was in grammar school. He said, "Well, my buddies." He meant a couple of navy men or whatever. I just broke down.

Ingersoll: Anybody would, yes.

Chavoor: I didn't know whether to spank him, or tie him up, or what.  
[Laughs]

Ingersoll: It's kind of hard to spank somebody who's having a beer with his buddies. [Laughter]

Chavoor: There at two o'clock in the morning, and I was tired. I thought, "I can't call the police, I can't call the police." So there were those stresses.

Ingersoll: What was Helen's reaction to something like that, when you told her about it?

Chavoor: I don't even remember that I told her about it. [Laughs] I may have told her about it, but it would upset her. They were children, they were no different from any other children. Their mother happened to be a member of Congress, and their father was off fighting a war. Things were like many other children whose fathers were off fighting a war, and whose mothers were out working somewhere. I could envisage headlines, "Where is the mother?" [Laughs] I figured--



Ingersoll: It was better to save her from that.

Chavoor: I was the mother enough. I remember there used to be a program where they interviewed members of Congress and their families. I remember one day, one morning, we were down in the dining room, having breakfast. I think the atomic energy fight was going on. Some things I can remember that come back to me as we're talking. There were mikes in front of them, and so forth. But I must say that the two children handled themselves very adroitly and in a sophisticated manner. They knew more about issues than a lot of other people did, and they were still young.

Ingersoll: They were watching?

Chavoor: They were on. They were on themselves. It was a family interview, and Helen and the two children were at the dining-room table having breakfast, and this used to go on in the morning, on some program in Washington at that time. And they would do various families.

Ingersoll: Were there any other instances like that where you felt it was a good experience, that the children grew by having this rather difficult but unique kind of experience with the mother doing the sorts of things that Helen was doing?

Chavoor: I can't think of another one right off, but these children had been exposed, and had been living with this for some time now, when both the parents were very active in California politically, and with the migrants and everything. Melvyn was very active in the Olson campaign, and was on the--I guess it was the Public Welfare Commission. So I remember that episode now when they were on that talk show. They were pretty wise in government.

Ingersoll: Very interesting. Was there ever any difficulty about just who their mother was, where the authority lay when both you and Helen were there?

Chavoor: No. No, I guess in that sense when you have a mother-grandmother relationship in the same household, or whatever, there is a possibility of trouble, and I don't know whether our relationship between the children and me was unique or not, but I think there must be other relationships that are the same. There never was a division of authority. Where one melted the other took on, and so forth. Peter was going through growing-up pains, or whatever, I guess.

Ingersoll: He would have been ten, then?

Chavoor: Yes, about ten. And he was kind of a rascal then. But he's developed into a pretty terrific human being. He has three sons of his own. [Laughter] I look at him today and I think. I look

- Chavoor: at him and I see him with those kids--well kids, one of them is in college, and one's about to go to college. And I watch him as he treats his children with love and tenderness. And, of course, when Peter's children were very little I was there, too. I used to babysit occasionally when Peter and his wife wanted to go out to a theater or something at night, and I was living in New York. And, I watch him now disciplining them, and I think, "Oh boy, how you've changed." Of course, he's a psychiatric social worker and psychologist now, so that makes a difference.
- Ingersoll: He's had many years to learn. Did you and Helen ever try to make up to Peter and Mary Helen for the times when both of you were working so hard for long periods of time at special times?
- Chavoor: Oh, sure.
- Ingersoll: What sort of things did you do?
- Chavoor: We had parties for them. It didn't matter how busy we were, or how hard we were working, or whatever. On the special occasions like birthdays and things, everything else stopped. There were many children's activities. And, of course, they weren't here that long with us.
- Ingersoll: How long were they here?
- Chavoor: I think maybe the equivalent of a year. About a year. So it wasn't an ongoing thing for six years.
- Ingersoll: That would be different.
- Chavoor: That would be different, and I don't know what the situation might have been. There were times just when everything had to stop.
- Ingersoll: Can you remember any particular instance, by any chance when busy congressional life had to stop and the children had to--
- Chavoor: We had birthday parties for them on their birthdays. And I remember the table was all set, and all the decorations and the favors. Plus the fact the children went to camp--they'd gone to camp before, and so the routine of that, going away to camp during the summer time didn't stop. I'm trying to remember if we had a special outing for them or not. But there were always people in the house. A very good friend of the Douglasses, Charles Hogan, used to come over. He was in Washington at the time, and he would take the children. There was always attention. That's the only way it can be.

- Ingersoll: Surely. I imagine there are people who respected Helen, and liked her children, and wanted to help out in this way.
- Chavoor: Yes. Of course, when they went back to California to live, that was something else again. They were going to Chadwick School then.
- Ingersoll: And then did Melvyn do some looking after them during the time they were living in Los Angeles?
- Chavoor: Yes, he was there.
- Ingersoll: And they'd come back from school weekends?
- Chavoor: Weekends, yes. And, of course, at the house they had a swimming pool, and they had their friends.
- Ingersoll: Surely. In some ways that may have been an easier life for them.
- Chavoor: I think so.
- Ingersoll: Easier than here in Washington, I suppose. Let's see. You said you moved fairly often while you were in Washington. Did you move during that period while the children were here, or only after they left?
- Chavoor: No, after they left.
- Ingersoll: So they didn't have to get acclimated to another house while they were in Washington.
- Chavoor: No. They had gone back to California when Gould Lincoln wanted to move back into his house. We only took two-year leases-- because you never know how elections are going to turn out, or-- [Laughs] Taking all the rent we paid, she could have bought a house.
- Ingersoll: Even after the children left, and there was just the household for the two of you here, that was still a pretty big job, with the rearrangements that had to be made when you changed houses, or that sort of thing.
- Chavoor: We were renting furnished houses, except for the silver and the linens.
- Ingersoll: Did you have to go out and buy new silver?
- Chavoor: Well, I did one time because we were--she sublet the one house, and so I had to go buy some china, and some flatware, and stuff.



Ingersoll: So you sublet houses while people were away, and when they wanted their house back again, then you had to find something else?

Chavoor: No, we did that only once, at Gould Lincoln's, the first house we were in on Bradley Lane. We had a two-year lease, and he was getting married again, and he wanted his house back, and Helen said, "By all means." And so we moved and stayed at a friend's house.

Then when she came back in '47, she had rented a house in Georgetown. That was for two years. When we left to go back to California for the campaign, I can't remember exactly when we left, and whether there were three months or four months, or whatever it was, left on the lease. I think that was the time Martha Gelhorn wanted to sublet for a few months, and so we sublet the house to her.

And then when we came back again the last Congress she was in, '49-'50, she had rented the house that was on Thirty-First Street, and I think it was George Marshall's house. Not George C. Marshall the secretary of state, but the Redskins Marshall. That was a charming house--they all were, but that was an especially charming house. It had an English basement.

I remember Bella Spewack was a guest in the house, Sam Spewack's wife. They wrote Kiss Me Kate. Why were they there? And the Leighters were there. I shouldn't say this, but we were shooting craps on the floor in that house one night. Obviously Helen wasn't there, she was off somewhere. [Laughs] We had a party going on.

Ingersoll: Would it be for an extended period of time that somebody like Bella Spewack or the Leighters would be there?

Chavoor: Well, the Leighters have been long-time friends. They're like family. But Bella Spewack, I don't know. There must have been some special occasion. It had to be in '49, because-- Of course, it was the Truman inaugural. It had to be for that.

Ingersoll: And it was for the days of the inaugural, and people were all there.

Chavoor: Sure, and Bella was sleeping downstairs in the room off the kitchen. That was a funny time. Jack and Lola Leighter, I think, had my bedroom because it was the only double-bed room in the house. I don't know, I was probably sleeping on a couch somewhere. Maybe I went to stay with some friends, I don't know.

Ingersoll: It sounds as though Helen had the sort of household where people came, stayed for a while, in and out, where people were very much a part of her life, even though she was very busy.

Chavoor: Oh sure. They had a community of friends in all walks of life. In the theater, I mentioned Bella and Sam Spewack, at that time. And they had some close friends who would visit occasionally. Jack and Lola Leichter particularly. And I remember that time Bella was there, because it was the inauguration. I guess housing was short. I don't know where I stayed, I must have stayed some place. I remember being there part of the time.

Ingersoll: In her speech to the Democratic Women's Club in Washington, that was January 1974, Helen Douglas spoke about the problems that faced the nation at that point, and she mentioned that there are problems of fuel, pollution, very close to home. And she said that some of the worst things she could think of at that time were the detergents polluting the nation's waters.

And according to the Washington Post article about that speech, she said "Sternly but without malice, 'There's always Fels Naphtha and Ivory soap and a little elbow grease.'" That article was from January 4, 1974. Does this ring true to her character from the days when you were in her household? That she would find substitutes, make her own domestic life somewhat harder if necessary when an individual's contribution could contribute to the country's welfare?

Chavoor: During those years, of course, there wasn't the emphasis on the whole environment and so forth.

Ingersoll: But there were wartime shortages in those early years, weren't there?

Chavoor: That's true.

Ingersoll: In '45, '46.

Chavoor: I don't know that we were affected by them, to tell you the truth.

Ingersoll: By that time things were getting better, of course.

Chavoor: But of course we were living in rented houses. There were shortages. So whatever there was a shortage of, you did without. I know since that speech, and before that speech, when the whole thrust was against pollution, and they didn't want you to use colored toilet paper because it was not biodegradable, and so on, I visited Helen up in Vermont, in the house that they have up there, and she'd go trudging off into town to buy a special kind of soap, or something to put into the dishwasher because she wasn't going to use any of that there stuff.

Ingersoll: So this is something that she's grown with through the years?

Chavoor: Oh, yes. She grew up in a family that was very community and civic minded, and even though she was off in the theater, she grew up with a set of parents who taught her what it meant to be a citizen in the world. That it counted and that she had to toe the mark, so she comes by it naturally.

Ingersoll: It sounds as though she does. Oh, it's so good to be able to have some of this intimate picture really of the problems, as well as the pleasures of the household. Is there anything you think we haven't covered in the way Helen coped with this kind of problem?

Chavoor: Helen was very fortunate in that she had people surrounding her in many different ways, who were always there to lend a hand because she was working and fighting for the things that they were working and fighting for, so it became a kind of a joint team effort, and it was all very pleasant, it was all very nice. It was a lot of hard work, but it was gratifying because of the end result, sometimes if you won.

And even while you were in the throes of trying to put something across, it was all so great in terms of the relationship and the interplay among the people who were involved, and it was all very exciting and stimulating. And so, the hard work just became nothing, really. At least that's the way I felt about it. Upon reflection I feel the same way. I never felt like I do sometimes when I come home now, oh, I'm so tired. I might have been bone weary--of course I was younger then, and I could bounce a lot more easily.

Ingersoll: Certainly the environment of work makes a great deal of difference.

Chavoor: Yes. I had much more zip then. And not because I was just young--because of the stimulation. I'm sure I would react the same way if I had the same stimulation now that I'm almost sixty. I'm sure that's what it was. It was a whole atmosphere.

Ingersoll: This was a big high of stimulating experience.

Chavoor: It was electrically charged. [Laughs]



The 1950 Campaign

[Interview 4: February 13, 1977]  
 [begin tape 4, side A]

Incidents from Earlier Periods: Going to the United Nations,  
 The Importance of the Democratic Credo

Ingersoll: Before we go on and talk about the 1950 campaign today, let's just pick up a couple of points that concern the campaigns of the past. There was one point concerning the 1946 campaign--the time that Helen was appointed as the alternate to the United Nations.

Chavoor: Yes, she was the alternate delegate to the United Nations--Truman had appointed her. And, of course, I was so excited; it was the most exciting thing that had happened next to Helen's being elected and being in Congress. I thought I was going to go to the UN, and to me this was the epitome of everything. I was getting myself all geared up and directing all my energies and activities to the point so that I could go to New York to the United Nations. And Helen just said, "But you can't go to the United Nations." And I said, "What do you mean, I can't go?" I don't know if these were the exact words, but in essence this was it.

And then she told me that Lorena Hickock was going to go, and I was so crushed, I said, "Well, I want to go. Why can't I go?" She said, "You have to go to Los Angeles for the campaign." And I said, "I don't need to go to-- There are other people in Los Angeles for the campaign." And she said, "If you don't go to Los Angeles to the campaign, I won't go to the United Nations." You know, on reflection now, when I recall this, I bet that was just her way of getting me there. I was just absolutely devastated. Anyway, I went to Los Angeles, obviously.

Ingersoll: Then there was another point that we talked about after the tape was off last week, and that was the point concerning the time "My Democratic Credo" was written--that really beautiful document, that you'd all worked so hard on.\*

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\*See Appendix, page 351.

Chavoor: I've been trying--since we talked last--to recap the whole thing and get it in my mind. And I talked to Andy Biemiller who was on the train when we went to Philadelphia, but he doesn't recall, and I said, "Who else was on the train, Andrew?" And he said, "Hannah." That's his wife. He said, "I can't remember." Well, it was some time ago. I know that it was during that period that we had worked so terribly hard on that speech, and I thought, "Ah, we're going to go, we're going to see Mel's show that he's producing. We're going to forget about this speech for a little while."

Ingersoll: You'd been working on it for quite a long period of time?

Chavoor: I can't remember exactly how long it had been worked on, but it was an intense thing. It was something Helen was driven by. And I know that she had talked to any number of people about it--the contents, the whole thing, to all of her friends. And as I recall--and I could be all wet and I could be all wrong--it was on the train, and again there was a coterie of people that were close to her, and up she pulls the speech again, to have somebody go over it. She just wanted it to be just right. I recall that.

Ingersoll: That speech, I think, I remember reading in a transcript of a tape that she made on the subject of Lyndon Johnson some years ago.

Chavoor: For the Johnson library?

Ingersoll: Yes. She felt very strongly about it because one of the southern representatives had at that time thrown around the word "communist." And she felt very, very strongly about the way the word "communist" was being used, the way it was being applied to liberal legislation. And that was why she felt it was so terribly important that she write this Democratic Credo, that said what the real democratic way was, and how much she resented all of the twisting of it, and calling liberal desires communistic.

Chavoor: Yes, I think in her speech, if I recall, I don't have it in front of me, she said she was jealous and she resented it when all the good things like housing and all those things that were part of our democracy were labeled "communist," and the communists were given credit for them. In essence that was the kind of thing she was saying.

Ingersoll: She felt very strongly.

Chavoor: She was very jealous of the "democratic" in that. Well, this follows then, because as I say, anybody within earshot or whoever would give her two minutes worth of time or would listen, and cared

Chavoor: about her at all, was drawn into this to go over it and over it, and over again, so that it was honed to perfection. It's a good speech.

Ingersoll: So, she couldn't put it down, even on the way to Philadelphia.

Chavoor: As I recall she couldn't. [Laughs] She put it down once we got there.

Ingersoll: I remember your mentioning the last time, that when she drew it out again your own feeling was, "Oh, no, not again!"

Chavoor: I can understand her being consumed with this, because it was something that she cared about very keenly, and she wanted to put the record straight.

Ingersoll: It was everything really, wasn't it? Well, let's move on and talk about that 1950 campaign.

#### The 1950 Campaign: Decision to Run

Ingersoll: Do you remember anything about Helen's decision to run for the Senate, and the reactions of anybody, your own or anybody else around at the time?

Chavoor: I guess my memory's pretty faulty on this. I, of course, wanted her to run because I was caught up in this whole thing. I know that there were a lot of pros and cons on the subject. It was not a hasty decision, it was not a frivolous decision. I don't think it was a decision based on, "I want to be in the Senate," looking upon the House as a lesser place to serve the people. I don't think she felt that way at all.

She felt very keenly about the reclamation program of the Department of the Interior, and the 160-acre limitation of federally supplied water--"supplied" is as good as another way to put it--for the state of California, the people in the San Joaquin valley. She was terribly disturbed and upset because the then-senior Senator of California, Sheridan Downey, had turned around and was not supporting the reclamation program. And, as I recall, she went to various members of the California delegation talking about it, asking them if they wouldn't run, not with the thought in mind, "I'm going to run." But, "Somebody has to do it, won't you do it?" And nobody would do it.



- Chavoor: So, she decided she would do it, and that decision wasn't made easily. I know that there were many many discussions--long range, short range, local, long distance, as to whether she ought to do it, or not. And I know there was also the consensus that if she had not run for the Senate, she came from a safe district in Los Angeles and she would have been there for as long as she chose to be there. So.
- Ingersoll: Was there a strong feeling on Helen's part, on other people's parts that she might not make it?
- Chavoor: I don't know if there was any strong feeling. They kept talking about, "Do you have \$100,000?" A hundred thousand dollars, which today is peanuts. And they kept saying, "But, you have to have \$100,000." And that seemed like an astronomical sum of money.
- Ingersoll: Can you remember any more of those discussions at the time? Helen's own feeling, any hesitancy she had about running?
- Chavoor: I can't remember.
- Ingersoll: I wonder if this would have any application at this point. I remember when we were talking about one of the earlier campaigns, 1946, or 1948, you told about how Ed Lybeck had called, and Helen had said, "Damn it, that's the one thing I didn't want to hear you say," when he talked about the people who had worked so hard to get her there. And your comment after that was, "She was just being Helen," in her response to Ed Lybeck. What did you mean by that? Did it have anything to do with how she felt about campaigning, or how she felt about campaign supporters?
- Chavoor: I can't recall in what context I said that. But you see, Helen had been so active politically in terms of organization. I mean organizing so that you went out and elected more people to the California delegation, organized the women so that they went out and did precinct work and so forth. Not that she did the organizing itself, but she was the catalyst. So she was aware of this kind of thing, and it meant a good deal to her. So Ed called because she had not sent in her papers yet, that she had signed.

When you're a candidate you have to sign, you have to get a petition, and everything else. And she had not sent the initial papers. So Ed was calling to say, "Hey, what's the matter, where are the papers?" So, Helen said, "Well, I'm not sure whether I'll run or not." And so Ed said, "That's not a choice you have to make. There are people who have supported you, and given all they have to get you there and elected, that's not a choice you have to make." And that's when she said, "Damn you, that's the one thing I didn't want you to say," and forthwith signed the papers, and sent them.

Chavoor: So it wasn't a question; she felt very keenly about the people who supported her. It was a very strong tie, a strong relationship there. I don't know, I think maybe Melvyn was sitting in Los Angeles, and she was sitting in Washington, and she probably thought, "Gee, do I still want to do this?" [Laughs]

Ingersoll: Do you think she had a feeling like that in 1950, too? Again, there was Melvyn in Los Angeles. Did she really want to stay in Washington?

Chavoor: I can't answer that, Fern. I don't know. Might have been. You know, the primary motivation was this: my God, the conversations that went on about the 160-acre limitation.

Ingersoll: Many of them, I imagine.

Chavoor: Ad nauseum.

Ingersoll: Before she even got into the campaign?

Chavoor: Yes. She kicked around this whole thing with many people. With Helen Fuller, for instance, and with the people in labor, and--

Ingersoll: What was Helen Fuller's feeling about her running, can you remember?

Chavoor: I can't tell you precisely. There was always a very analytical, clinical type of a discussion about the pros and the cons. I can't even recall that I was present when the final decision was made. I just can't remember.

Ingersoll: Was it Helen Douglas who basically made the final decision, do you think?

Chavoor: It would have to be Helen Douglas to make the final decision. Nobody else could make it for her. [Laughs]

#### Evelyn Chavoor's Part in the Campaign

Ingersoll: Tell me a little bit about your part in the campaign, Evie. At what point did you go back to California? What was involved in LBJ wanting you to stay in Washington, and your wanting to get out of there?

Chavoor: Well, at one time when we were talking about my going to Los Angeles and being in the campaign, Helen had said that perhaps I ought to stay in Washington and run the office, and so forth, and

Chavoor: that Lyndon Johnson who, of course, was an experienced person in this area, had said to her, "You've got to keep one important person in the office in Washington to mind the store." And so that was supposed to be my role. Only I refused it. [Laughs]

Ingersoll: You were the one who really--

Chavoor: I don't know how it came about because that isn't my way generally. Usually they say, "Okay, you have to do this, you have to do that." Well that's not true either, probably because I'm stubborn, and I'm a fighter for what I think is right. But when it comes to fighting for something for me that I think is right, forget it. So this was out of character for me.

Ingersoll: At that point what was your feeling?

Chavoor: I just wanted to be in-- I figured, I wanted to be where the action was. And I felt I wanted to be a part of it, and I felt that if she didn't get elected, to hell with what would happen in the office. I can understand Lyndon Johnson's feeling because there could be things coming up during the course of the campaign, where something might be critical, and some group of constituents might be looking to Washington, looking to Helen and she would not be there. I can understand that--that's being a real practical, pragmatic politician. I just figured somebody else could be minding the store.

Ingersoll: Who did mind the store while you were out?

Chavoor: Well, we had a fairly--there were several people on the staff. Juanita and I went back to Washington. Mary Vance wasn't there in Washington anymore. There were several people in the office, but then also Mercedes Davidson came and worked in the office, and she more or less replaced me.

Ingersoll: She was there throughout the 1950 campaign?

Chavoor: From the time that I left until the time I came back.

Ingersoll: Had Helen promised you any position on her staff if she became Senator?

Chavoor: We never even discussed it.

Ingersoll: It never came up at all?

Chavoor: [Laughs] What would there be to discuss? All I know, sometimes Helen would say, "If we get to the Senate... When we get to the Senate we'll have more money for staff." Because it's according



Chavoor: to population, and California, of course, is a large state, so we were going to have more staff. And she said, "We'll have somebody in charge of interior and reclamation and power, and all that kind of stuff," and then we'd have somebody responsible for this, and maybe an economist who knew about housing, and economic things, and she would go and list all these various areas of great concern to her, and to our country, and to everybody, actually.

Maybe once in a while I'd pop up and I'd say, "Ah um. And where are we going to have any money left to get the clerks to do the clerking and the typing?" And that would stop her for a minute. And then she'd start again another time, and she'd go-- And I'd say, "Yes, that sounds great, Helen. Where's the money going to come from so we can have some typists on the staff?" [Laughter] That was wild. She didn't have much time to talk about things like that, but occasionally, we would, they'd come up.

Ingersoll: At what point did you go back to California to help with the campaign?

Chavoor: I can't remember precisely whether it was March or April, or what. I do know that things had started already, when I arrived. I'm trying to remember dear old Ed Flynn--I guess he wondered, "What are we going to do with her?" [Laughs] I don't know whether they wondered or not. But I just came in as though I belonged, and that was part of it.

Ingersoll: You certainly did belong from then on, I imagine. The pace of that campaign must have been just fantastic. I remember reading about the pace in Helen Douglas's May twenty-ninth column, "My Senate Campaign." It would have been 1950.

Chavoor: Do you mean when we had the news blackout?

Ingersoll: Yes.

Chavoor: We bought space in the newspapers and she did a column, like Mrs. Roosevelt.

Ingersoll: That was such a good idea, because I understand that the newspapers just weren't covering her campaign.

Chavoor: Well, this was during the primary, and the Daily News, the Los Angeles Daily News which was the Democratic newspaper, of course, had its publisher running for the nomination. And they'd supported Helen in all the other campaigns--in the last three, '44, '46, '48. They thought she was a fair-haired girl, and

- Chavoor: suddenly they weren't even printing her name, unless it was something on the minus side. So in the Los Angeles Times and the Examiner, and I think they had the Herald Express then, they wouldn't see her for dust. So we took a little column, because they had the news blacked out.
- Ingersoll: What a good kind of strategy really.
- Chavoor: Well, it wasn't very effective, was it? We didn't win. We did win the primary.
- Ingersoll: You certainly did. I remember reading in this particular column on May 29, that she wrote after the night's meeting at Redding, "Even though I had made ten speeches that day, I asked to be driven to the Shasta dam." And then in the week's calendar there were daily appearances, often two or three a day. Were you with her at many of these?
- Chavoor: I was there all the time. I was there all the time. I remember one day she had to be up in the northern part of the state--in Kentville, which is way at the tippytop. Helen flew up the day before--I think she went to Fresno. I got up at the crack of dawn the next day, I drove to Fresno. I met with Helen. We went over some things. She then took a plane to Sacramento. I left her in Fresno. I stopped by the San Francisco headquarters, and then I went on up to Kentville where there was an evening meeting. And after that was over, she and I got into the car, and then I drove back to San Francisco. We got into San Francisco at two o'clock in the morning. I had been on the road since four o'clock the previous morning.

And I knew what was going to happen in San Francisco. We went to the Clift Hotel where the Labor's League for Political Education--anyway, the political arm of the AFL, because there wasn't a merger with the CIO then--they were going to have their meeting and they were going to make the nominations--their endorsements.

I had now been on the road since four o'clock the previous morning, but I was young then. Here were all these laborers there, and the minute Helen arrived, they got around the car, and they all started to escort her upstairs to the hotel suite--they were going to have another bull session until God knows what time. And there I stood by the side of the car, because there was no bellman there at that hour, getting all the luggage out of the car, and I turned around and I said--boy, this was women's lib long before women's lib. And so I truded all the luggage upstairs, and there we were and Helen looked up at me, and said, "Do you



Chavoor: think there is some place we can get some coffee and some sandwiches? These men are all hungry." And at that point, I don't know what I thought. Anyway. Yes, I was there.

Then we used a helicopter. We would have the schedule, and she would get in the helicopter, and she would go on her way, and I would get into the car, and have some of the press people with me. She would be landing about when I got there, because what I would do, when she was halfway through her speech, I would leave and get in the car and go to the next stop so that by the time I got there, she'd have just gotten there. Wild!

Ingersoll: Can you think\*of anything else that you did to make this kind of fantastic-paced schedule possible?

Chavoor: There were a lot of people around who loved Helen, and who really cared because she cared about the things they cared about. So there was always one person who would drop by the way, and fifty-eleven others would be there to take over. I can't tell you, Fern, I can't put into words, there's just something about her that engenders in people a desire to do, because of the kind of person that she is, and the things that she cares about, and the way she goes about making it known. And so there was always a coterie of people around her. Otherwise I don't think we could have survived.

Ingersoll: It seems fantastic to me that you were able to survive that kind of pace. And yet she got criticism. Some of the opposition propaganda made the point that Helen was spending a great deal of time campaigning--was not in the House. Was this true?

Chavoor: Oh, you mean in the House of Representatives. That was the political advertisement which appeared in the Los Angeles Daily News on the day of the primary election attacking Helen's attendance record in the early months of 1950, among other things, put out by the "Women's Committee for Good Government," Mrs. Mattison Boyd Jones, Chairman. Well, I think there was some jealousy and resentment involved in that. But, also, it's true. Prior to that time, she had a beautiful, perfectly wonderful voting record, but you damn well can't be in the House of Representatives voting when you're out trying to get votes for the Senate. You can't cut it both ways. And that was a carping kind of thing to do. They didn't bother to mention in that article, in that ad, her voting record for '45 or '46, and '47, and '48 and '49 which was darn near perfect in terms of attendance.

Ingersoll: Right, they didn't.



Chavoor: Why am I being so vehement? It's all dead and gone [laughs].

Ingersoll: It's no wonder, Evie. This was just one point, as you say, in this long list of things that the women had put out as propaganda against her. The ad was among the things you've kept through the years. [Advertisement of Women's Committee for Good Government, Los Angeles Daily News, 5 June 1950]

Chavoor: One needs to remember that these were the women who for instance --in any group there are always two sides. These women had been active in the Democratic party in the state when the machinery was dominated by the men; when the women played a passive role. When Helen was selected as Democratic National Committeewoman by the delegates to the 1940 national convention, Mrs. Mattison Boyd Jones felt that she should have been the one elected. Then Helen in 1941 was appointed vice-chairman of the Democratic State Central Committee, and in 1942 she was unanimously elected as chairman of the state central committee's women's division.

Never before had anyone served in these several capacities at one time. She did not seek these offices. On the train to the 1940 Democratic National Convention in Chicago, several people approached Helen and asked if she would consider being national committeewoman. Both her name and that of Mrs. Mattison Boyd Jones were submitted, and the delegates chose Helen. At the time she was not even aware of the responsibilities of a Democratic National Committeewoman, let alone vice-chairman of the state central committee. She was appointed to that position by William Malone, chairman of the Democratic State Central Committee. But she soon found out.

Under her leadership, the women's arm of the state Democratic party was transformed from a passive role, reliant on the men for financing and office space, into an effective vehicle. She established a headquarters in Los Angeles, with a full-time executive secretary, her first financial investment in the political independence of the women's division. She mobilized the women. She sought out and received the assistance of learned and qualified women. Issue seminars were conducted; regional conferences were held. All of her efforts were directed towards strengthening President Roosevelt's support in the Congress. And in this, they were most successful.

Throughout this period Helen was able to weld the women together, keep them together and make the women's division into a cohesive, effective organization. Not without some opposition, of course, but she was successful in that more women were supportive of her than not--and many of the men, too.

Chavoor: In 1944 when Helen was elected to Congress, she relinquished these roles. Then when Helen ran for the Senate in 1950, the Ed Pauleys, the Jim Sheppards, the J.B. Elliots, all oil people and who had been in charge of the state Democratic party machinery and who controlled the women's division before Helen took it over, opposed her because of her position on tidelands oil (federal control of offshore oil deposits versus oil companies control). She gained their enmity because she refused to cut a deal with them--their support of her candidacy for the Senate in exchange for the reversal of her position on tidelands oil. So, Mrs. Mattison Boyd Jones and the others of that faction who normally sided with the J.B. Elliots, et cetera, split off and opposed her, too. Then they dredged up all this other stuff. If she hadn't run for the Senate, they never would have said anything about it.

Ingersoll: No, probably not. Was there anything that you or anybody else could do on that question of not being in the House of Representatives, or was that just an impossible situation?

Chavoor: You can be on the defensive all the time and try and explain and you can never catch up. This is like an incident in the 1950 campaign, when Zazu Pitts said something scurrilous about Helen. I don't remember the exact words, but intimation was that she was red, or a communist, or what have you. J. Ray Files, an eminent lawyer who was active in Helen's campaign--I can't remember now whether he had been the United States attorney and later became a judge--was consulted. The big question was: Was Helen going to reply, were we going to sue, should Helen file suit against Zazu Pitts? The feeling on most everyone's part was that Helen should file suit because what she had said about Helen was pretty blatant, that she shouldn't be allowed to get away with it.

And J. Ray Files said, "When you sue, they are going to print it in the papers, and they are going to have to repeat the charges that were made initially, that prompted you to sue. And then all the people who didn't know about it in the first place are going to know about it. And each time something happens, some mention is made of the suit, they're going to keep repeating and repeating and repeating the initial charge. There is neither the time, nor the money, to counteract this kind of thing. You never can catch up." I'll never forget that. And we didn't sue. And you can't. No matter whether it's a Helen--I don't care who it is.



- Ingersoll: I remember your mentioning that incident in a letter that you wrote to Helen a little while later about something else.\* The letter happens to be in one of the files that you handed to me with a lot of other things. And another thing you mention in the letter in connection with the Zazu Pitts incident, was that J. Ray Files also had said that it's so much harder to prove "I am not a Communist than it is to prove I am an American by waving Old Glory."
- Chavoor: Exactly. What do you do? What kind of evidence do you present to prove you're not a Communist? By saying you belong to the DAR [Daughters of the American Revolution]?
- Ingersoll: So any kind of suit is almost an impossible situation in those kinds of times. But to go on with your part in the campaign, another thing you mentioned that I wanted to ask you some more about, was the doorbell ringing part of the campaign you and a number of other people were involved in. When you mentioned this before, you said that some of the responses to that doorbell ringing were not very nice. Can you give any specific instances of that?
- Chavoor: Of course, during the '50 campaign I didn't do as much doorbell ringing as I did in the earlier campaigns, but I did do some as I recall. I remember having doors slammed in my face, not rather abruptly, but abruptly and with a kind of a mean snarl about communists, or words to that effect. And you just shake it off and go to the next door.
- Ingersoll: Was that a common sort of response that campaigners for Helen got, do you think?
- Chavoor: There was some of it.
- Ingersoll: At least not rare?
- Chavoor: No, indeed. I must say that the Nixon campaign was a very well-organized campaign, very well orchestrated. They evidently had money, and they had Murray Chotiner who was a master at this sort of thing. I remember the headquarters at the Alexandria Hotel, at Fifth and Spring Streets, in downtown Los Angeles--

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\*Evelyn Chavoor to Helen Gahagan Douglas, 23 June 1961. Helen Gahagan Douglas was at the time working for a program of the Nuclear Policy Committee, and a member of the John Birch Society had again by innuendo called her a Communist. [Ed.]



Ingersoll: This was headquarters for--

Chavoor: For the Douglas campaign. Because Helen was a woman, they organized a women's brigade for Nixon. It was very effective--I can't deny it. The women would be stationed at all four corners of several square blocks in downtown Los Angeles where several large department stores were located, so that everytime one turned around, you came upon these women with "WOMEN FOR NIXON" banners across their bosoms. They would be handing anti-Douglas materials or literature to the women as they came by which intimated that Helen was less than to be desired as a patriotic citizen.

I was on my way to the Douglas headquarters this particular day and became so incensed when one of the women made a derogatory remark about Helen as she attempted to hand me a piece of literature, that I slapped her, and then I ran like hell. That was a terrible thing to do. That was a very bad moment.

Ingersoll: In your things there was another item that was very interesting, and that was a letter from somebody called Sue to Helen Gahagan Douglas in February, 1953, and in this she included a very well thought out, very fair, I thought, piece which she had called "Republican Techniques in the 1950 California Senatorial Race Between Helen Gahagan Douglas and Richard Nixon."\*

Chavoor: This was done by whom? What was the name?

Ingersoll: Let me show you this now. Oh, it was Sue Lilienthal who wrote this.

Chavoor: Yes, Sue Lilienthal.

Ingersoll: Take a look at that, Evie, and give me any sort of comments you would like to make about it.

Chavoor: There was one thing here that got me so excited, this one thing that I kept contending after it was all over with, and I haven't been able to corroborate it, actually document it. This is the kind of thing that Sue talks about, too. I remember the time that I drove all the way up to Kentville, where there was a dinner reception and rally for Helen. And someone showed me a full-page ad that Nixon people had put in the paper--I don't know whether it was done by the campaign officially or Richard Nixon--anyway, his supporters up in that neck of the woods.

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\* See Appendix, page 358.

Chavoor: Nixon people always made such a fine line; they said, "That wasn't our campaign, those were some of our supporters. We didn't have anything to do with it." Well, they never denounced it, they never said, "That's terrible, don't do it." Anyway, we did. If we didn't like some literature our people were putting out, we'd say, "Ah ha, you don't do it."

Ingersoll: What a different response!

Chavoor: Anyway. It listed the names of the boys in the local areas who had been injured, or maimed, or killed in action, who had lost a limb, et cetera, and it said, what are we fighting for in Korea when we've got this representing us at home in the House of Representatives. And then they would list Mrs. Douglas's votes, next to the vote of [Vito] Marcantonio, who was supposed to have been a communist. I'll never forget that day. I haven't been able to find that paper--I don't know if anybody has really gone to look for it, but I know it existed, I know I saw it. It's not a figment of my imagination. And Sue then mentions it in here. Oh well. [Phone rings. Tape turned off]

Ingersoll: Let's come back and talk about the Nixon campaign a little later, but before that, going back to the closeness of your work with Helen, being with her all the time during that campaign. There certainly must have been times when the tension just got tremendous. Weren't there?

Chavoor: Yes, obviously. I remember one day, Juanita Barbee who was on our staff, had come up to the house to work with us. I lived there at the house, I was there round the clock with Helen. And Helen had gone off to a meeting someplace, and Juanita and I had stayed behind because there was some work that had to be done, something that Helen wanted to have done; I can't remember precisely what it was now. But anyway, there the two of us were, and it must have been after midnight. The way the house is located, you come up to the motor court--Melvyn's bedroom looked off on a little patio of its own--and you can come up around the side, and come into his room (there were Dutch doors). All the rooms of the house faced off to a patio someplace.

But anyway, we heard the car and Helen came up the steps around the side, and she opened the Dutch door. I was standing there in the room, Juanita was there, and she opened the door, and she started to let off steam; she was just lambasting all over the place, for some things that had not been done. She was terribly upset about it. I just stood there kind of numb because I had had nothing to do with it, but anyway, she kept carrying on. And all of a sudden, right in the middle of a sentence, she stopped

Chavoor: short, and she said, "I don't know why I'm hollering at you. You had nothing to do with it. Look what time it is, and the two of you are still here working. It isn't your fault. I don't know why I did it. I had to holler at somebody." And she turned around and walked into her room.

Then, of course, I don't know whether it was that night that I overslept, or the next night. Anyway, Helen was due to catch a very early flight from the Burbank Airport to go to San Diego for a series of meetings. Juanita had spent the night, and I'd set the alarm. It seemed as if I'd just gone to sleep when Juanita was shaking me. "Evie, Evie, Evie. You've overslept. Helen's missed the plane." Well, I scurried around doing what I could to charter a plane to get her down to San Diego. I had never done anything like that, and I wanted to die right then and there. If they'd come and shot me, that would have been great.

Ingersoll: That must have been kind of hard, with not a great deal of money right in your hands at the time, to charter a plane.

Chavoor: I had nothing. I was ready to sign my life away to do it. We finally got her on a little plane. I didn't go. I was supposed to go, but I didn't go. I got left behind. [Laughs] There was probably still too much work to be done.

Ingersoll: What other kind of work was involved in all of this? A lot of letter writing?

Chavoor: Oh, sure. If you're with a candidate all the time, there are day-to-day things. I remember when I was traveling with her, wherever we went, we would leave one city or one town and go to another town. Helen would be off with the people from that community who had organized the activities for the day. She would leave in the morning. I would stay behind and either be working on a speech or typing all the letters that had to go out, thanking the people who had participated in the activities the day before. I had a little portable typewriter, and I would bang away. Upon her return she'd sign the letters so that the people the next day or the day after that got a thank you letter from her. It was kind of wild.

Ingersoll: It certainly must have been.

Chavoor: But I was young, and it was fun.

Ingersoll: Did you do any speaking?

Chavoor: No.



Ingersoll: Did you have anything to do with the putting out of that speakers manual [Douglas for Senate Speakers Manual]?

Chavoor: No. Most of that was prepared already.

Ingersoll: And the Blue Book?

Chavoor: No. I helped gather some of the materials together, but all of the material that went into the Blue Book was pulled together and prepared by Lucy Kramer, and others.

Effectiveness of the Douglas Campaign: The Blue Book, Defensive Position, Temper of the Times, Women's Groups

Ingersoll: While we're speaking of the Blue Book, do you have any way of knowing how effective that was?

Chavoor: This was a tool so that people who were involved in the campaign would have source material to be able to answer charges or to prepare campaign literature, or to--this was the record. And rather than somebody saying, "Well, what happened on this thing," and doing a lot of researching on it at that moment, it was all together, compact. This was a very telling document. You see, this was August 20, 1950.

Ingersoll: Yes, there's a great deal of information in a very small--

Chavoor: The other thing in here [looking at the Blue Book] that it points out. I remember when I was in Santa Barbara one night with Helen. Helen was speaking to the ADA [Americans for Democratic Action], and Richard Nixon was in town--he was speaking to another group in one of the school auditoriums.

Helen went off, and I said, "Goodbye. I've heard you, I'm going to go listen to him." [Laughs] And I sat there, and I listened to that speech. He was talking on foreign policy, and he did a very telling job, and for a person who was not as knowledgeable as I was, it all sounded very plausible. I knew, for instance, at that point in my life, when he was talking about certain pieces of legislation that had to do with foreign affairs, of the amendments that had been offered on the floor of the House to cripple them. I knew he had voted in favor of the crippling amendments. Then he would say, "Oh, I voted for this, and I voted for that." And it was all very true, but he did not tell the story about the crippling amendments that he supported. And all of that is pointed out in the Blue Book. I came away very shaken.

Ingersoll: From that Nixon talk?

Chavoor: Yes. It sounded all very plausible.

Ingersoll: Did you have any other experiences like that with Nixon's techniques?

Chavoor: Did we tape that story about the women and the street corners?

Ingersoll: The women's brigade, yes.

Chavoor: No, that's the only time, I think, that I kind of-- I'd probably have been more comfortable if I had gone to hear Helen somewhere else, but that was the one time I remember very vividly going and hearing him speak. Well, he did this two years later in the Checkers speech. It shows how--

Ingersoll: The same kind of thing.

Chavoor: Same kind of thing. [Tape turned off]  
[end tape 4, side A; begin tape 4, side B]

Ingersoll: This is a good time to talk about that article that was in the Southern California Quarterly--the one that Ingrid Scobie wrote, and some of the points that she made that you and I have both read.\* What's your own feeling about some of the points she made, particularly that point that Helen was on the defensive so much of the time?

Chavoor: I think that's true. I think she was on the defensive. You wanted to go out and talk about the issues that you thought were important; you wanted to emphasize the positive side of it. But everytime you turned around there was some kind of scurrilous piece of campaign literature being put out--half-truths being said. So that many of the people who were supporting Helen got upset and wanted her to go on with the offensive in answering him.

I know at one time some of the people in the AFL wanted Helen to put out an ad categorically denying that she was a communist, saying "I'm not now a communist, I never have been, et cetera." They were almost so persuasive that she was going to

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\*Helen Gahagan Douglas and Her 1950 Senate Race with Richard M. Nixon," Spring 1976.

Chavoor: do it, and then she got angry with it at the last minute, and she said, "I'm not going to do it. I'm not going to get up and beat my breast, 'I'm not a communist, I'm not a communist, I'm not a communist.' I'm not a communist. I'm not going to resort to their tactics."

You can't go talk about 160-acre limitations, and reclamation, and water, when somebody is talking about your communist leanings, and here we were in the midst of the war in Korea. It was effective, and I think perhaps, if he had not done the red-smear that he might still have won; but with the temper of the times in which we were living--and we were at war with Korea, in Korea and there was the whole communist thrust--he had to make a tie-in somewhere, and I guess she was on the defensive.

Ingersoll: Do you agree with Scobie then that even if he hadn't used the red-smear that the temper of the times was in his favor, in favor of the sorts of things that he was saying?

Chavoor: Yes, I think so. I think, because of the temper of the times, and the fact that we were in the Korean War, he had to tie it in some; but I don't think he had to go to the extremes that he went to, because this was the whole thrust of his campaign. Now, he's denied it, and then he's acknowledged it and said he's ashamed of it, and then he's denied it again. He denied that he's said that he was ashamed of it. This man is something else again. I don't know, I think the American people deserved him, they voted for him. [Laughs]

Ingersoll: It's an awful sort of thing to have to feel, and yet he was part of the spirit of the times, wasn't he?

Chavoor: I think, you know, that as long as we have fear, as long as Russia is a threat, I think we're going to live with it from here on out. It's evident even now with the Paul Warnecke confirmation hearings.

Ingersoll: Yes, it's all coming up over and over again that people say that he's going to be too soft.

Chavoor: Yes, as long as we dared release the bomb. This is where we're going to live from that day forward.

Ingersoll: That was such a decisive move, wasn't it?

Chavoor: From that day forward. And I don't know, even if we hadn't released it, if we hadn't dropped it, the fact that it had become a known thing meant that there would be the acceleration and other countries would get it. I don't know, but as long as there is that threat--



- Ingersoll: Everybody feels afraid. You mentioned to me once when we didn't have the tape on that you had an experience in a hotel which brought this feeling of how really fearful everybody, big or little, was at that time. The waitress--
- Chavoor: Oh, yes. One afternoon at lunch at the Biltmore Hotel in downtown Los Angeles. I always had matches--Douglas matches and little pieces of literature that I would very surreptitiously hand out--and of course the waitresses had always supported Helen in her district. And I remember that particular afternoon I kind of handed the waitress some matches and she looked at me with fear and said, "Well, we love Mrs. Douglas and we've always supported her, but not now with the communist fear." It was effective. The red-scare was effective. It did the job. It had to because she would have won otherwise. I just suppose that. [Laughs] Helen has gone around making speeches and been here and there and everybody has said, "I voted for you, I supported you. I was all for you." Helen says, "Why didn't I win with all these people supporting me?" [Laughs]
- Ingersoll: I thought it was interesting that you said that some of her campaign supporters had wanted her to go on the offensive somewhat more. And that reminded me of an article that was in the Washington paper, I think, after she spoke to the Democratic Women's Club here.\* That was during the Watergate difficulties in 1974, and she said, "They told me in 1950, when I voted against the McCarran Act, that I couldn't get around the state of California fast enough to answer the things the Nixon supporters would say. They said, 'He'll beat your brains in.' And I said, 'That's not my concern. What is important is to figure out what's right and do it. It's difficult enough to figure out what's right, I can't also figure out what's smart.'"
- Chavoor: It's true. Because I remember when that vote came up: Helen had flown back to Washington. We were sitting at the campaign headquarters, and Ed Lybeck and Harold Tipton, and all of us were kind of kicking it around, and mulling it over in our minds. We knew that this was a crucial vote, we knew in terms of electability that this was a crucial vote, and that this would be another thing that they could hammer her with. But Ed, Tip, we all knew the way she was going to vote, and knew the way she had to vote. And this was one of the reasons we were supporting her, too, because of that kind of thing.

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\*The Washington Post, 4 January 1974.

Chavoor: The phone rang, and it was Helen, and she said that the vote was coming up, and she said, "You know what I'm going to do." And I don't know whether Tip or Ed was talking to her, or both of them were talking with her, or what, but anyway one of them answered, "Yes, Helen, we know."

"Okay, just wanted to tell you, because you know what this might mean."

"Sure."

And I think there was an editorial in the St. Louis Post Dispatch about that afterwards. Was it "Nineteen Men and a Woman?" I think this was in both the Senate and the House of Representatives; they were the only ones who voted against the bill. And they bludgeoned her. [Tape turned off]

Ingersoll: Then there was another point in the Southern California Quarterly article that I thought you might speak to--the point that many women did work for Helen, but there were a number of women's groups who were not in favor of her for one reason or another. One of the points Scobie brings up is that time in September 1950, when Helen Gahagan Douglas was supposed to debate with Richard Nixon at the Biltmore Hotel, and she had to come back to Washington for an important vote. She didn't debate with Nixon and Jimmy Roosevelt took her place. Do you remember that time at all? No? The point was made that this was the Business and Professional Women, if I'm not mistaken, and they felt let down.

Chavoor: Yes. I can't remember that Jimmy Roosevelt spoke. I remember the professional women. Fern, I can't remember. I can remember there was something to do with the Business and Professional Women--I don't know whether she was going to speak to them herself, and Jimmy spoke. I can't imagine that she would ever have agreed to debate Richard Nixon. Maybe she did and I don't remember.

Ingersoll: The San Francisco Examiner had a piece about this, too. Let me just show you these notes then from the San Francisco Examiner article. Do you want to comment on those?

Chavoor: This says on September 21, 1950, there was supposed to have been a debate between Nixon and Mrs. Douglas at the Biltmore Hotel in Los Angeles; instead Jimmy Roosevelt appeared with five thousand guests present. All right. Number one, I can't believe that Helen would have entered into an agreement to debate with Mr. Nixon. I can almost say point-blank this would have been contrary to anything that anybody in the campaign would have let her do.

Chavoor: Now, there was going to be a meeting with the Business and Professional Women's club. I'm vague on this, but I think that's so. And I can't believe that she would talk about the trend of communism in the United States. Now, I may be all wet. If somebody could document this I would like to see it. "The day before an anti-communist bill was passed overwhelmingly by the House, but both Roosevelt and Douglas had voted with the minority of twenty against this measure." It's true, they were talking about the McCarran bill, and Mrs. Douglas did vote against it. However, Jimmy Roosevelt was not a member of Congress.

Ingersoll: That is strange, isn't it.

Chavoor: He ran for the governorship that year, in 1950, so he couldn't have been in the Congress of the United States, so the article is erroneous. And anyway, let's assume that the women were disappointed. Sure, they were disappointed. Anytime you get up a group to hear somebody and the speaker doesn't come, you are disappointed, but is this the basis on which you make your decision as to whom you're going to vote for, because she appeared before a meeting or she didn't appear before a meeting? I thought you voted for people because you liked their support of legislation and what they believed in was in tune with what you believed in. Not on the basis of, oh, she didn't appear at a women's meeting.

Ingersoll: I would think so, too. How would you feel about it? Would business and professional women particularly be influenced by something like that, by a woman's appearing or not appearing when she had--

Chavoor: I would hope not, but who knows. It wouldn't have influenced me, and I know it wouldn't have influenced you. Sure you're disappointed. It's just like you break your neck to put on a soiree or something, and the guest of honor doesn't appear. But there are circumstances that could prevent somebody from not appearing. And if she went back to vote on that bill, I really feel like I would like to have this documented.

Ingersoll: I'll see if California has the original of that article from which these notes were taken.

Chavoor: I remember vaguely that there was some conversation going on about speaking before the Business and Professional Women, but to debate Nixon, never. I'm trying to remember if that was the bill that Truman vetoed. [Phone rings. Tape turned off]



## Mid-Campaign Reactions

- Ingersoll: There were several questions that I had in mind concerning Helen's and your reactions to things during the campaign. Were there moments in that 1950 campaign when Helen was discouraged?
- Chavoor: If there were she never gave evidence of it, to the public anyplace, anytime. Never.
- Ingersoll: But to you yourself?
- Chavoor: Well, I sensed it, but then after all, we were very close. I was there with her twenty-four hours a day. [Phone rings. Tape turned off]
- Ingersoll: How would she show these periods of discouragement to you, Evie?
- Chavoor: She never really showed it. [Laughs] I just sensed it. I don't know if there was really any discouragement, whether you want to call it that or not. But you know, as the campaign was going along, and all these things were coming out, and we were going about doing our thing, and trying to put up a positive campaign-- I don't know whether this is something that comes with people who are in the political arena for a period of years, you just sort of sense certain things. And I had a feeling that maybe we weren't going to make it.
- Ingersoll: And then there were polls, weren't there. Frank Rogers told me that in the very beginning the polls showed that nobody could beat Nixon. Do you remember anything like that?
- Chavoor: No, I don't. But Frank would, you see he was a newspaperman.
- Ingersoll: Yes, that would be his bailiwick, really. Then I have the results of a poll called the California Poll, printed in the San Francisco Examiner, October 30, 1950, that showed that Nixon was ahead, that voters showed that 49% of those polled would vote for Nixon, 39% for Douglas, and 12% were still undecided. Do you remember any reaction of Helen's or of yours to that?
- Chavoor: I can't remember, Fern. I don't know whether I was aware of it and didn't want to be aware of it, or whether I didn't know about it. I can well understand how I might have wanted to put it back on the top closet shelf and forget about it and say, "Well, he's still not over 50%; we still have a fighting chance." I can't recall. I think perhaps when I look back, on reflection, that

- Chavoor: maybe down deep inside Ed and the rest of them, all thought it finally, at this stage of the game, a lost cause. And they probably were aware of the poll. You can't help but come to some kind of conclusion even though you do it silently and not out loud. With all this calumny poured down upon you day in and day out, day in and day out, and you finally get an attitude of crawling into a shell or something. Maybe that's what I did.
- Ingersoll: Maybe so, yes. Another thing I was wondering about--Leo Goodman says that there were some really nasty tricks that were played on Helen during the campaign. He mentioned once when a bale of hay fell, not by accident he felt, on her while she was speaking. Do you have any memories of that sort of thing?
- Chavoor: Was that at the University of Southern California? I can't recall. There were some episodes. I think that when Helen went to the University of Southern California--the campus is in the city of Los Angeles--I think there was an incident. I can't bring it into focus.
- Ingersoll: Do you mention her reaction to it at all?
- Chavoor: Her reaction was like the one the writer in the Washington Post article noted--"anger without malice." That's the kind of thing. I'm trying to remember that episode. God, if only Ed were here. If only Ed were here, period. He's such a great guy. There was an incident, I think. She's a consummate actress. You throw tomatoes at her, and that isn't going to throw her.
- Ingersoll: She'd keep on?
- Chavoor: Sure. Sure, at the University of Southern California, that great institution. I can't remember.

Other Reasons for Loss: 160-Acre Limitation, Korean War, Party Schisms

- Ingersoll: Let's talk a little bit about other possible reasons for the loss. I know you said that overall you felt there really wasn't a possibility of winning at that time. But what's your feeling about something that Frank Rogers told me? He said he felt that Helen defeated herself by making such a constant strong issue of the 160-acre limitation for the use of water in the Central Valley. How do you feel about that?

Chavoor: Well, I think that's oversimplifying it. There is some validity to that in that she did talk about it, and she did make an issue of it, but that wouldn't make her win or lose an election. There were other things that were spoken of. There were other issues that were talked about, and she spoke on the Democratic ticket, the precepts of the Democratic party on all those things. But she did go on about the 160-acre limitation for the use of water in the Central Valley.

I remember one day in the hot boiling sun in Fresno, or some place wherever we were, the helicopter was due to leave, and I kept tugging at her. She had been talking about the Central Valley and the 160-acre thing about half an hour, and I kept saying, "Helen, that's enough already, come on let's go, let's go." And she said, "They want to know about it." And she went on and talked some more.

You know, she was a crusader, she had to educate everybody. But, that's Frank's concept and I'm not to say "nay." And there was some validity to it. But you just can't be defeated because you talk about one issue all the time. You got defeated because you talked about that issue, and the opposition was slandering you, and you didn't slander back. That's how you got defeated.

Ingersoll: Did you ever try to get her to talk less on the water issue?

Chavoor: [Laughs] Not really, I suppose. Yes, every once in a while I'd say, "Hey, you know, enough already." She was a woman like Joan of Arc, or somebody. and it was very vital, and it is very vital. I think we've lost the fight now after all these years. And you have all these big acres and acres that are owned by combines and monopolies and everything, and the little family farmer goes down the drain like everything else in the world.

Ingersoll: Leo Goodman felt that even by running in the primaries and defeating Downey, she had done something in terms of the family farm. It wasn't a complete loss, that 1950 election.

Chavoor: That's right. Because Downey got out of the race and then Boddy [Manchester] got into it. And Boddy would have supported the 160-acre limitation, I think. In fact, I'm sure he would. But the fact that she won the primary was important. Of course, they could say, Boddy wasn't well known. Well, heck, she wasn't that well known either, at that time. And then they'd go on and say that the Nixon people hoped she would win because they felt she'd be easier to defeat. If we hadn't gone into the Korean War, we would have won.

Ingersoll: You feel the Korean War really had an important effect on the temper of the time?



Chavoor: Absolutely. Suddenly we were in a war with the communists in northern Korea. The whole climate, everything changed.

Ingersoll: Do you think Helen had the feeling when we went into the Korean War that this--

Chavoor: Right at that moment? I don't know.

Ingersoll: This would change the whole trend of the election?

Chavoor: I think subsequently. I think she realized that. I don't know right at that moment. Because that was in June I think that we went into Korea. And the primary was June--the early part of June. So it was right there. And I know Tip, who was a campaign coordinator, was a marine reservist, and there was a sudden thing about, gee, is Tip going to have to leave now in the middle of all of this?

Ingersoll: Who was Tip?

Chavoor: Harold Tipton.

Ingersoll: Oh, yes. That made the whole thing very--

Chavoor: So you wondered about that. He didn't have to go, but it was very telling and very much at home.

Ingersoll: In a note from the files of the San Francisco Examiner in June, there was the idea that large factions of the Democratic party opposed her in the north [Northern California] and that her strength was mainly in the south [Southern California]. Do you remember anything about this in discussion of the strategy to get the north?

Chavoor: Fern, I don't. I'm trying to remember who in the north would be opposing her. I was more familiar, of course, with the people in the south because I'm from the south. You have Johnny-come-latelies like Mrs. Goetz. [Laughs] Not to the Democratic party, obviously, but to California.

Ingersoll: What was your thought with Mrs. Goetz?

Chavoor: You said there were people in the north in the Democratic party who were opposing Helen, and I said, yes, like the Johnny-come-latelies like Mrs. Goetz who just moved to San Francisco. You know, this goes back--Helen's been in politics, not just when she ran for Congress, she was involved way before that when she was national committeewoman and state vice-chairman, and there

Chavoor: was only one way to go and that was the right way as far as she was concerned, and her way was the right way. And I'm sure that there-- Helen never, I don't think Helen ever did anything on the basis of a power play, on the basis of building herself up or being an important VIP, or anything like that. She was a VIP, long before she ever got into this, so if there was a cause or a purpose that she was fighting for, struggling for, it was this that she concentrated on, this was her whole motivation.

And I am sure there are people in the Democratic party, like there are other human beings, a lot of us, all of us, who are motivated in terms of, well, what will this get me? Of course, sure, I'm for this issue, I want to fight for this purpose, but, ah, will my name go down on the top or will my name be second on the invitation list? Or, where will my name be on the letterhead, or something like that. I'm sure that this has happened, and I'm sure there were power plays and people who felt resentful to her, because whatever she did she did with such ease.

And because she was motivated by only one thing. And I'm sure this created schism. And then I'm sure issue-wise it created schism. I know in the whole business of oil, and we talked about this before, that there was a sharp cleavage and the Sheppards and the Pauleys and everybody went over on the other side, and they became the Democrats for Nixon. And it all came down to an economic issue--oil. Oil, oil, oil, we're still talking about oil.

Ingersoll: And were these people, the Sheppards and the Pauleys, people who would have gained if prices of oil had been state rather than--

Chavoor: Absolutely, Ed Pauley was--everybody in California knows this-- he was the oil mogul.

Ingersoll: Oh, yes, he'd have a good reason.

Chavoor: They all had good reasons, I mean, as far as the economics were concerned. But this goes again for the Democrats who opposed Helen. Mrs. Mattison Boyd Jones, she was one of the people who got her nose out of joint someplace. She wanted to be named Democratic National Committeewoman. It gets down to that kind of petty thing. They just didn't want her to be Senator. They would rather have had Nixon than a Democrat who was Helen Douglas. That's like the Jimmy Roosevelt that came out Democrats for Nixon in the '72 campaign. You figure that one out.

Ingersoll: Well, let's go on to--

Chavoor: I'm glad I don't have too much longer to live because with all the things I'm saying, and all the things that are going to go down, it's a good thing I'm not going to be there. Otherwise I'd have everybody hating me.

#### Finances

Ingersoll: Do you think there's anything else we should add about the whole campaign, any other incidents that you think we should put down before we talk about closing up the office? [Tape turned off] Evie, what can you tell me about the campaign financing, and the relationship between contributions and expenditures?

Chavoor: Well, obviously we never had enough money. I remember when Helen was going to run, and was talking about running, and there was a lot of conversation going on, and everybody said, "Well, you're going to have \$100,000." Well, you know, \$100,000 is mud in your eye in this day and age. Anyway, after the election was over there was a deficit. Of course, we didn't have any billboards or anything like that, we never could afford anything like that. Anyway, billboards, I think, are psychological tools for your campaign workers.

So Helen gathered whatever money she could to pay off those people who had to be paid, for instance the media people, and the advertising people. Those are debts that you can't pay off a little bit at a time. And I recall the day after the election, I was on the telephone. Helen was on the telephone. People were calling and commiserating and everything. And I got on the telephone, one of the phones, to try to get some money to help pay off the deficit. So anytime anybody said they'd give us \$1,000 or something, Helen said, "Quick, get in the car. Go get it right now." [Laughs] "While the wound is quite fresh." Then that afternoon, after I came back, she said, "Okay, go ahead and make a reservation for me to go to San Francisco." And I said, "What!" We were all just beat.

Ingersoll: This was the very day after the election?

Chavoor: The day after the election. She said, "Make a reservation for me to go to San Francisco." And I think she was going to go the next afternoon. Or was it that afternoon? It was either that afternoon the day after the election, or the next afternoon. And I said, "Oh, Helen, do you have to go now? Why don't you wait and go--" "No, I was here yesterday. They've worked hard, they've bled, and I'm going up." So, I drove her to the airport,



Chavoor: and as she got out of the car--I was going to drop her off--the baggage man came and recognized her, and said, "Oh, Mrs. Douglas, oh, Mrs. Douglas, what have we done to you?" The tears rolling down his face--a black man. He said, "How could we have done this, how could we have done this?" The tears-- Not enough.

Ingersoll: If there could have been more like him. [Tape turned off]

"The Past is Prologue": Reactions of Helen Gahagan Douglas and Campaign Workers to Defeat

[begin tape 5, side A]

Ingersoll: You've been in several campaigns where people have been defeated, so you've got a point of comparison. Do you have a feeling there was any difference in the feelings of the people who worked with Helen when she was defeated from other groups of people you've known in that similar situation?

Chavoor: Roz Wyman was defeated for the city council, and even before that Blair Moody was defeated in 1952 for Senator for Michigan.

Ingersoll: I know you've mentioned those to me and that's why I thought you'd have a point of comparison.

Chavoor: I can't say. I don't think so.

Ingersoll: You don't think there was any way in which they felt it any more deeply than others whose candidate had been defeated?

Chavoor: I worked with Senator Moody for a short period of time. He was a former newspaperman who was appointed to replace Vandenberg [Senator Arthur] when he died. And "Soapy" Williams was then governor of Michigan. The people with whom I worked I'd just gotten to know, and they were all fine, wonderful people. I can't judge their feelings about his defeat as I can my own feelings, and those of us who worked with Helen over a period of a long time.

There was just something special about Helen--the kind of person she was. And so was Blair Moody a very fine person. I don't know if he had the generosity, as much generosity of spirit as Helen has. Unfortunately, he died too. Roz Wyman got her political indoctrination in Helen's '50 campaign, and she's one of these warm, outgoing, generous people. I've been very fortunate in the people whom I've worked with.

Ingersoll: And there are good reasons why everybody would have felt it was a great loss when any of these people were defeated.

Chavoor: Yes, definitely. Yes, very definitely.

Ingersoll: I was thinking particularly about an article in the Los Angeles Times, and Edith Weiss--the article was written later, in 1974, but Edith Weiss, a long-time active Democrat, described the luncheon that was given soon after the 1950 defeat. And she said that Helen was the only one not in tears, at that luncheon.

Chavoor: True.

Ingersoll: Do you remember that?

Chavoor: Sure. Of course, I left to come back to Washington to close out the office. But there was a gathering--and this isn't the same thing as Edith Weiss is talking about--Edith was one of the very good people in the campaign, too. She and her husband, Dr. Weiss. That's true. Even election night, when everybody else was devastated, not Helen. If there was anything there, she didn't show it.

One of the newspapermen came up and said that Mrs. Douglas had said that it was all right if they came along when she left to go on home. And I put my foot down, and said, "No, never." But that's the way--

Ingersoll: She was ready to go on and take them with her.

Chavoor: Yes. I wouldn't let them. [Laughs] I was protecting her; she didn't know any better.

Ingersoll: She certainly needed her privacy at that moment.

Chavoor: I figured finally, whatever time it was, it was after midnight, what have you. And they were going to come up, and for what? What purpose was it going to serve? So they could say how she carried on, or didn't carry on after she got home? She didn't carry on. We were tired and we talked, and I think we went to bed.

Ingersoll: She took it very much in her stride. You mentioned going back then to Washington to close up the office. Were there any particular incidents in connection with that that would be interesting to note?

Chavoor: I recall, Helen had agreed to send her papers to the University of Oklahoma, and everybody asked, why the University of Oklahoma? And I said, "Because they asked." [Laughs] And the archivists,

Chavoor: and the assistant archivists, came [to Washington, D.C.]. And I remember night after night, after night, reading six years of accumulation. I read every letter that we had in every file because I felt that I didn't have the right to let letters in which people had written something very personal go into what would become a public depository at some point, whenever the date was reached when the restrictions that were on it expired. And I just didn't feel that those belonged at the university archives.

And I also recall Helen had gotten many awards--they were all framed and in her office, like most members of Congress--both in the House and the Senate, from the B'nai B'rith women, and many others, and I had said, "What happens to these? Shall I pack them and send them up to Vermont, or what do you want done?" And she said, "They all go to the university." And I said, "All these awards and everything? All of these beautiful things that people have said about you? And she said, "Yes." And I just stood there in amazement. And she said, "The past is prologue. What are we going to do from here on out? That's what counts." And so they all went.

Miscellaneous Items From Helen Gahagan Douglas's Congressional Years and After

[Interview 5: February 20, 1977]

Helen Gahagan Douglas's Decision Making

Ingersoll: Evie, there are just a few points I would like to pick up. Something you spoke of after the tape was turned off last time. That was in connection with the Greece-Turkey aid vote, and you gave a picture of some of Helen's decision making. Could you talk a little more about that?

Chavoor: I remember it, I suppose, because it became such an issue later on. Anyway, her vote on that bill--like all the rest--was not one that she was frivolous about, and her decision was not one she arrived at without giving it a lot of deep thought. As a matter of fact, she agonized over it. She dissected that whole bill, all the arguments for and against, backwards and forwards, and six ways to Sunday. She talked about it with everybody, and I think, if I recall correctly, Melvyn was in Washington right about that time for a visit, for whatever reason I can't tell you



Chavoor: right now, I don't know. I can't remember. But, the Greece and Turkey aid bill was coming up in another day or two, or whatever, and I remember the discussion that went on in the House. Back and forth, back and forth, back and forth, about whether this was a good bill, whether it was the right thing to do, whether you could vote against it, because after all we had just gone through the Marshall Plan giving aid to everyone.

But Helen was not against the aid, it was just the manner in which it was contemplated, and there were no safeguards. But this was true, no matter what the legislation was. Sometimes something was very clear cut, and there were no two ways about it, there was no argument about it, because it was right and that was it. But on those things that were not so clear cut, that were not so clean, where there was some doubt, there was a lot of study, and a lot of thinking, and a lot of reading, and a lot of discussion. Her decisions were not made frivolously. And she voted against it.

Ingersoll: Was Helen Fuller one of the people whom she talked to?

Chavoor: She was one. Oh, sure, Helen Fuller would be one. Any of the people who were active in foreign affairs, who were either in the government, or in the Congress, or people who were in outside groups--outside of the government and outside of the Congress--who were interested in foreign policy, and you could term "lobbyist" if you wanted to, or you could label them "interested citizens," interested and concerned citizens. Particularly because it was the administration bill, and particularly because the general concept, the idea of the aid, was one that she favored, it was a long time before she finally decided to vote against the bill.

Ingersoll: But the way it was being given, outside of the United Nations, and without any safeguards to giving our atomic energy information, and that sort of thing, was something that she considered very much.

Chavoor: Yes.

Ingersoll: Then there were other things that she felt very, very strongly about. When the McCarran Act came up, for instance. I remember your telling me something that we didn't get on tape concerning how she tried to get her Democratic colleagues to vote against the McCarran Act. Could you talk a little bit more about that?

Chavoor: I was not in Washington at that time. If I recall that was in 1950, and in the fall, wasn't it? I say in the fall because I know it was before the general election and it had to have been

Chavoor: after the primary, and the vote was coming up, and I recall one day we were sitting at the headquarters down on--I've forgotten which one it was. We had a big headquarters, and there was a little office in another building where the campaign manager and the assistants would all gather when we had to sit there and make some hard decisions. I guess the time was approaching when we knew the vote was going to come up, and we were all sort of sitting around talking; we knew that it was a sensitive vote. Sensitive in that her opponent would attack her for the wrong reasons.

But, anyway, the phone rang and Helen was on the phone, calling from Washington, from the office or the cloakroom, I don't know where. And she said, "Well, the vote's coming up." And we said, "Yes, we know, and as a matter of fact, we had been talking about it." And she said, "Well, you know what I'm going to do." And we said, "Yes."

"Well, I just wanted to be sure. I wanted to be sure you all knew because you know what it can mean."

And we said, "We know. And we know what you're going to do, and that's one of the reasons that we're working for you, and supporting you, and fighting for you as are thousands and thousands of other people. Just for that kind of a reason." I remember that, and she did it.

There was an editorial in the St. Louis Post Dispatch. I wish I had it in my hand, but it's probably in Oklahoma or someplace. And it said, "Nineteen Men and a Woman." And I think this was a combination of the Senate and the House. It wasn't just the House. I think Paul Douglas in the Senate voted against it, and some very beautiful people. And there was Helen. And she subsequently told the story about how during that vote, Sam Rayburn and a lot of others came up to her and said, "Helen, you can't do this. You can't do this. You can't vote against this bill." Because of the political ramifications of it.

"I have to do what I have to do." And she went on and did it. And then she corraled as many people as she could--her friends in the House, just grabbing hold of their arms, and not letting them move away from her side until after that vote came up so that she could get at least some support. It was a rough one.

Ingersoll: She made sure they got there, and she made sure--

Chavoor: She was there, and she was talking to them hard and fast, and the way she just kind of held on to their arms. Put her arms through theirs so that they would not wander away. The expedient



Chavoor: thing and the politic thing to do was to have voted for the bill. The thing that made everyone who believed in her believe in her was that she was able to do the courageous thing.

I guess you're expendable. I guess you have to be expendable so that the rest of the people who are good, but who don't have that kind of courage, or can't afford to have that kind of courage, can do the things that they do, and yet remain there. A friend of ours always said that if Helen had not run for the Senate she would have been elected and reelected to the House any number of times, and she would then eventually have been the chairman of the then Foreign Affairs Committee which is now the International Relations Committee of the House. And my retort always was that, "Well, there have to be those who are the expendables--who always have to hew to the line in order to give all the rest of you the liberty to do what you do." [Laughs] It's kind of silly, I suppose, but anyway that's what I said.

Ingersoll: One other point I wanted to pick up was in connection with the writing of her Democratic Credo, which we talked quite a bit about last time. But there was one point that I don't think I got down on tape, and that was how she had other people look at it after she had thought it out, figured it out, perhaps give her some idea of how it was going to come across, but no one ever felt there was anything that would be held against her, as the first sentence was.\*

Chavoor: Well, the first sentence taken out of context.\*\* Nobody, of all the people who read it, who looked at it, who worked at it, who made any suggestions about it--nobody talked about that first sentence.

Ingersoll: Do you remember any other legislation that had a particularly interesting workup to it, that Helen worked on in any particular way, with any particular people, with any particular difficulties in the decision making?

Chavoor: God, this is horrible. I've got to stop being so dogmatic.

Ingersoll: No, you feel these things strongly, that's all right. Go ahead.

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\*Evenly Chavoor repeated the story of Helen Douglas getting out the speech on the train to Philadelphia.

\*\*"I think we all know that communism is no real threat to the democratic institutions of our country." (See Appendix, page 351,)



- Chavoor: Helen was a voracious reader, and she had a very analytical mind. Also, you can say she had a one-track mind. When she was in the theater she was concentrating on the theater. When she was studying to sing opera in Europe, she divorced the theater from her mind, this was it. And when she went to Congress, this was the one thing that she concentrated on. I used to read to her by the hour--the legislation and the bills, or the hearings in Congress. And when I would read, I would read not for the sense of the contents so that I would learn something from it, I would read so that somebody else hearing it would be able to grasp it. And I used to wonder sometimes.
- Ingersoll: Did it help her for you to read it to her rather than to have to read it herself?
- Chavoor: She would read it herself, don't misunderstand me. But many times I would read, and the next thing I knew, when we were off in the car, we'd be going, bang, bang, bang, she had it all in her head. It's a real talent, I wish I had it.
- Ingersoll: Many of us would, surely. Was other decision making simpler than that Greece-Turkey aid bill, do you think? Clearer cut, perhaps?
- Chavoor: Things were more clear cut. There was no question about housing. There was no question about any of the domestic policies. There was no question about aid to the war-torn countries in Europe. There was never any question about the Committee on Un-American Activities.
- Ingersoll: And you talked about how hard she worked at trying to get the information she and others would need to make a good vote on the atomic energy problem.
- Chavoor: And that was a unique bill. It was a unique subject matter. It was a unique bill. But generally, if you'd done your homework, and studied and knew the pros and cons of a given piece of legislation, there was always the Republican position, the Democratic position. So that was pretty much up and down. That's why it's always amusingly interesting when they say she voted with Marcantonio. You either voted with the Democrats or the Republicans. There wasn't a third way to vote. She grabbed on to the Market Basket speech and the whole business of inflation and controls and worked at that, but that wasn't a difficult subject to her. It wasn't a difficult decision to make in terms of what direction she was going to go. She was just a good student. She did her homework.

Helen Gahagan Douglas's Activities After Congress: Family,  
Politics, International Concerns

Ingersoll: One other thing I wanted to pick up, Evie, was that you had mentioned before that it was a difficult time in Washington for the children. They were in the public eye, and this is never easy for children. How do you feel about it as you look back now on Helen's losing the 1950 campaign, going back into her family more? What kind of an effect do you see?

Chavoor: Well, I have thought many times to myself privately, that maybe it was just as well that she lost. From a personal standpoint, I would have dearly loved it if she had won. She could have made a tremendous contribution as she'd done before, and been a vital force; but on the other hand, maybe it was time to devote more time to her family. You have to remember that she was in the theater, she was in opera, and she was politically involved, but she was there. This time it meant a separation.

The children were with us for a while, but then they returned to Los Angeles; and long-distance parenthood, and long-distance marriages are difficult. They're both difficult under the best of circumstances, and I personally have thought that maybe this was the way it was supposed to be, for the children, the family and everything, that maybe they're better off. It has been difficult for the children.

Under the best of circumstances when your parents are in Hollywood, when they're in the arts in New York, I wonder sometimes about the children of the present crop of the people who are in the arts, because I can think back to Edward G. Robinson's son, and some of the problems with him. I think this is indigenous to people who are in that kind of public eye, as it is to people who are in Congress. It's not unique with one group or the other. So I think the fact that we're going to celebrate Melvyn's birthday on April 5, and their forty-sixth wedding anniversary, is a milestone. And who knows, it may not have come about if Helen had won.

Ingersoll: It's probably very likely that the strains would have been too great.

Chavoor: Or if she had won she may not have stayed in very long. Just like the time when she almost didn't run for reelection in the House. I think, I've said it, she's alive today and she may not have been if she had won.



Ingersoll: Evie, were there any professional or personal achievements of Helen's in later years that you were involved in in any way?

Chavoor: Not really, because they stayed in California, I remained in Washington. Then they moved to New York, so I was away. I was in contact, but I was not a part of it anymore; and they have now a person by the name of Nan Stevens who used to do work for Melvyn off and on when he was doing a play in New York, and now does it for the family. She comes in one day a week, two days a week, whatever, to do the secretarial work, and pay the bills and what have you. And shortly after I got acquainted with her, and finally when I got to know her, she said to me one day (we're very good friends), she said, "I almost hated you. I could hate you very easily."

"But what have I done?"

"Well, in the beginning, everytime I turned around and Helen couldn't remember something, or if there was a question raised, 'Call Evie.' Or, 'Write Evie. Evie will know.'" And she said, "I almost got a complex about this whole thing. But now that I know you, it doesn't bother me." She herself will now write me occasionally, and she says, "Okay, you're one up on me. What's this all about?" Even to this day.

But the only time I got involved at all was when Helen made a trip through South America, and I was with the Gahagan Company in Tampa. I remember pulling a lot of material together for her on that trip, and doing odd jobs for her before she went. I had to go out and earn a living. [Laughs]

Ingersoll: Did Helen continue through the years, at least occasionally, to be accused of being a communist, or something like that? And did you sometimes help her to answer some of these accusations? I ask that question because there was a letter in your files where she apparently had written to you asking you for some information, and the letter was your response. You might perhaps take a look at that. [Tape turned off]

Chavoor: Helen was involved with the Committee for Sane Nuclear Policy, and this was an attack on her, I guess, trying to downgrade the efforts of that committee, and they were dredging up some of the old stuff about her. And Helen had written to me. I was at that time in Tampa with the Gahagan Dredging Corporation, and they were pinpointing certain things she may have sponsored or may not have sponsored, and she, in her usual way thinking I can remember everything, and know everything, asked me to give her the background information on it.



Chavoor: You have to remember that whatever files we had are at the University of Oklahoma, or stuck away someplace and not readily available. But some of these things she did sponsor--all very good things. I think this letter was prompted by the John Birch Society attack on the Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy.

Ingersoll: Let's see, the date of that letter is June 23, 1961.

Chavoor: Helen, because of her involvement in the atomic energy bill, and because of her own personal concern and deep concern about the whole issue of atomic energy, and peace in the world and the destruction of the world, what we're doing to ourselves, was very active and continued to be active in that whole area. Most of the time this is what she was talking about. She still is making speeches.

Well, she did some other things, too, before and after she was defeated. She did a play. She read some poetry with Basil Rathbone. She read some poetry up in New York. She can recite Emily Dickinson at the drop of a hat. [Laughs] She knows every one of her sonnets. And she's been very active in several of the political campaigns.

I remember when I was visiting up in New York once when William Ryan was running for Congress in the district in which she lived, she had a group of people in at the house. I know she was involved in the senatorial campaigns, and during the presidential campaigns of Lyndon Johnson, and even with Jack Kennedy she was making speeches all over the place. So, she really wasn't out of the political thing at all.

Maybe she did not hold an official position, was not appointed to anything, and maybe she felt that that kind of a strain would be too much in terms of her family relationships and obligations, and it's true, it would have. But when you are doing all of these other things in a concerted way but still voluntarily, it isn't being in a certain place at a certain time or being in Washington and what have you. So, she was doing all of that, and I know that she made a study trip of South America when I was still in Tampa. Then she went back, and prepared the report for the president who was then Lyndon Johnson. So, she's very much present, and is making her impact.

Ingersoll: It was during that Johnson administration that she was representative to Liberia, too, wasn't it?

Chavoor: Oh, that was wild. It had to be shortly--it had to be the year--that was in November, 1963 when Kennedy was assassinated, and I know I was working for the Wymans and I was back in Los Angeles.

Chavoor: My father had died in '63, that was the key to my remembering. Helen had come out to Los Angeles because Mel was doing either a movie or a television movie, and it was New Year's Eve--we were going to go out that night. We were going to visit the Leighters at their house in Brentwood. These had been long-time friends. We were going to have a quiet dinner, we were going to play bridge, we were going to bring in the new year, and it was going to be nice and quiet.

And when we got there--the Leighters had other guests--Fernando Llamas who was living in the guest house, and who was dating Esther Williams at the time; they were there, too. And they stayed, and they stayed, and Esther Williams kept talking and talking and I kept saying to myself, why don't they all go so that we can play some bridge. [Laughs] Anyway, they finally went home and we finally broke up long after the new year was brought in. It must have been about three o'clock in the morning, or four, what have you.

And I went on my way--I went home, and the Douglasses went back to the hotel. I don't know the exact time but at some ungodly hour in the morning the telephone rang and it was Helen on the phone. I said, "What's up? What's going on at this hour in the morning?", because I think I was going to see them later on in the day, and she said, "I need your help." And I said, "What's up?" She said, "You'll have to help me find a gown because I'm going to go to Liberia to be the president's representative for the inauguration of the president, which was Tubman. I said, "What?"

And then she told me that Lyndon Johnson had called in the morning, and that this was what she was going to do. This was New Year's Day. And she had to go back to New York--they thought maybe she could just fly from Los Angeles directly, but then she had to go back to New York, she had to get a passport, and a lot of other things.

She said, "I have to get the proper kind of gown." I said, "This is New Year's Day." And she said, "Yes, I know, and you said that before." Anyway, I said, "Let me see what I can do." So, I called Roz Wyman. Roz was still a member of the city council. She knew Estelle Allerdale who had one of the big shops there and who opened her shop. It was right across the street from Saks Fifth Avenue, and through Diane Baker, one of the departments in Saks was opened. We found the gown.



Chavoor: The first one she tried on--it was just the ideal gown, but it was much too long, and this was yards and yards and yards of chiffon. So they finally had to--I don't know how many alteration ladies came in--and they worked through the night. In the morning I went to pick up the gown. Helen was taking the twelve o'clock flight to New York and flying to Europe the next day. Diane Baker was in tow. I guess she wasn't making a picture, so she went to New York with Helen, so that she could get her off properly for Liberia.

I remember the young man at the switchboard at the hotel where Helen and Melvyn were staying, who was a foreigner and who had instructions not to disturb them in the morning because it was almost daylight when they got to bed on New Year's morning. Melvyn told the story of how the phone rang, and he answered the phone and this voice, absolutely filled with fright, saying, "Mr. Douglas, I'm sorry. I know you told me you didn't want to be disturbed, but the president is calling from the White House." [Laughs]

He was absolutely awestruck, and petrified that he had to wake them. I keep forgetting, and now and then a story will come to mind. Well, I can only remember those that I participated in. But that was wild. Open up the store, they had to have the gown. But you know, we did it.

Ingersoll: And she did so many other things through the years.

Chavoor: She did. She did things and she participated in the local elections. Every time they turned around, of course, they wanted her to run, and she wouldn't do that. And then I know she was directly involved in two of the presidential campaigns. Lyndon Johnson, and before that Jack Kennedy. And I was visiting in New York when they had a meeting in Helen's apartment for William Ryan who was subsequently replaced by Bella Abzug when he died, and which is Helen's district.

And then she was active in the senatorial campaign, and she would have been active in this last one--they used her name in the Carter campaign--but she couldn't go make any speeches because she's ill. Oh, she came to Washington a few years ago and made a speech before the Women's Democratic National Committee. The women put on a bit--

Ingersoll: Luncheon, wasn't it?

Chavoor: No, that was at the woman's National Democratic Club. No, this was an arm of the National Democratic Committee, the official arm of the Democratic National Committee. The women had gathered



Chavoor: from all around the country to participate in various seminars being conducted. The day's activities were capped by a dinner. Helen spoke, and Frank Church was there--

Ingersoll: What year would that have been?

Chavoor: This was 1974, 1973, I can't remember. It was only a couple of years ago, before the elections, so it had to be '74. She went to Russia under the sponsorship of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. So, what has she been doing? Doing a lot of things.

Evelyn Chavoor's Career: A Support Person

[end tape 5, side A; begin tape 5, side B]

Ingersoll: Evie, you yourself had a very interesting career between politics and business through the years. Could you tell us a little bit about your political jobs, especially since this is part of the Women in Politics project. What they entailed, particularly the more challenging parts of the jobs?

Chavoor: Well, of course there were the six years with Helen when she was in Congress. I ran the office, and I ran the house.

Ingersoll: The part with Helen we have a pretty good look at now.

Chavoor: And then after Helen was defeated, I came back and cleared out the office, and there was the question of finding a job. And I had a very difficult time. I had a difficult time because every time I would go to my friends, they'd say, "We can't hire you. What would we have you do?" And I'd say, "I'll do anything. I'll type, I'll file, I'll do anything. I need a job." And I had a very difficult time. They just felt they couldn't give me what they probably thought was a nondescript job. I didn't think it was, anymore than I thought that some of the things I did for Helen were nondescript; I thought in my way I was making a contribution.

In any event, I had gone to see friends of Helen's, and friends of mine, and asked them for recommendations so that I could get jobs. And during one conversation with Abe Fortas, when I asked if I could use his name as a reference, he said, "Why don't you come and see me?" And I did, and he said, "Why don't you come and work for my law firm?" And I guess I was too geared towards the political thing, because at that time I said I appreciated the offer and I'd let him know. Well, after three

Chavoor: or four months--three months I think it was, because I think I went to work for them in March finally--still no job, I was borrowing money to make ends meet. I went back and asked if there was still a job for me. And I went to work for the law firm as a file clerk.

It was while I was there that Blair Moody was appointed Senator for Michigan--this was upon the death of Arthur Vandenberg. And India Edwards, who was the vice-chairman of the Democratic National Committee and head of the women's activities, called and asked me if I would go to help Blair Moody. I said yes, and we made the arrangements, so I worked for Blair Moody while he finished up the Vandenberg term, then he was up for election in 1952. So, while I was on his staff, I went to Detroit and helped set up the campaign office, and then after the convention in Chicago that year, I went to work in the campaign.

Ingersoll: What other sorts of things did you do while you were in his office?

Chavoor: It was funny because when I went to be interviewed and hired, the chap who was then the executive secretary and was more or less in charge of the running of the office, told me later that he was very much opposed to my coming on the staff because, as he told the Senator at the time, "We don't need any more chiefs." It's a slur to say we need Indians and not chiefs. But that was the expression that he used at the time, and he later said, "I misjudged you." [Laughs] Because I did anything and everything.

The Senator's aide--his counsel in Detroit--had been to the office several times, and he wanted somebody to come out to the Detroit office for an interim period, and he said, "That's the person I want." So, I did legislative research, and I set up the file system, and I helped set up the office in Detroit, and I worked in the campaign--they gave me anything and everything. I set up the schedule.

Ingersoll: You certainly were experienced for something like that.

Chavoor: That I was. But then Blair Moody was defeated in 1952. He went down with [Adlai] Stevenson and the rest of them. And I then, as I recall, went home. I had been home only for maybe a month or so when I got a call from Phil Stern, that's Philip M. Stern, who's written some books, and he asked me if I would come and work for him and with him. And I did. He was the director of research of the Democratic National Committee at the time.



Chavoor: I came to Washington, and that was a time when it was great fun, because Eisenhower was president, and Clayton Fritchey was a deputy director and headed up all the Public Relations Division of the Democratic National Committee. The Research Division was really doing a terrific job. The Democratic National Committee was putting out a publication called the Democratic Digest--it was a fun thing, it was a terrific thing. We really had a magazine going.

Sam Brightman, the director of publicity, was a really bright guy, and we had cartoonists. The staff did an in-depth study of everything that was happening in that Eisenhower administration, because they were preparing all the background material that was going to be used then for the next presidential election.

Ingersoll: And you were involved in the writing or the getting out of the Democratic Digest?

Chavoor: Yes, I was one of the people on the staff. I was really the assistant to the research director, and that was Phil Stern. During that year Rosalind Wyman--Wiener she was then--was elected to the city council, that was when she was twenty-one years old.

Ingersoll: In Los Angeles?

Chavoor: In Los Angeles. That was her first time in office, and she was just twenty-one. Each council representative had a field representative; in other words, somebody who would be there to handle the problems that would come before the members of the council. So she asked me if I would come back to Los Angeles to be her field representative. At the time I wanted to go back to Los Angeles, so I did. And I was her field representative.

And then there was a problem in 1954 with the then-candidate for governor, Richard Graves. There was a difference of opinion as to who would be the state chairman, and he took one position, and his staff took another position, so there was a vacuum created there. So they asked me if I would take over the campaign, in Southern California, and I did. We lost. [Laughs]

It was after that--I guess it was in the beginning of 1955--that Paul Butler of Indiana had been elected chairman of the Democratic National Committee. The deputy chairman was Hy Raskin who had been out in Los Angeles, and he had talked with Paul Ziffren who was the Democratic National Committeeman--at that time there was one Democratic National Committeeman and one committeewoman from each state, not like it is now where it has proliferated and they have many from each state. Hy Raskin asked me if there was any reason why I had to stay in Los Angeles. Off

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\*Rosalind Wiener Wyman, "It's a Girl," Three Terms on the Los Angeles City Council, 1953-1965, Three Decades in the Democratic Party, 1948-1978, Regional Oral History Office, University of California, Berkeley, 1980.



Chavoor: and on during the years I had family situations and things that prevented me from doing maybe some things that I might have done-- I don't know what I would have done--but anyway, at those times I was more or less obligated to stay. But this time I said, no there wasn't, and I was free to do whatever I decided to do.

Anyway, they said to me that I would like Paul Butler because he was a dedicated person, and a very sensitive person, and he was much like Helen in the things that he believed in, and fought for. And I said, "Well, that's fine and dandy your telling me I will like Paul Butler, but Paul Butler has never laid eyes on me. How do I know that he's going to like me?" And also, he was involved in Indiana politics. Surely he had people who were surrounding him, or had surrounded him and had worked with him and he would feel closer to, and that he would bring to Washington for that kind of a role. And they said, "No, no."

So, I remember going to the airport to meet with Hy Raskin because he was in between arriving and going wherever he was going, and that was a convenient thing to do. Of course, I had known him in 1953 when I was in the Research Division, so he wasn't a stranger to me. And we were sitting down and we were talking about the job, and so forth.

Then we got to talk about salary, which always comes up no matter who you are or whether you're male or female, and I mentioned the salary I thought I should have. He kind of blinked and said that Paul Butler was a rather provincial man, and he would take pretty hard the fact that I wanted \$750 a month (I think it was that I asked for at that time). And he suggested another salary, and with that I said, "What's the matter? Is that too much because I don't wear pants?" And Hy Raskin turned around and looked at me, and said, "You don't?" [Laughs] Of course, I said, "All right, trousers. Okay, you're the deputy director, what are you being paid?"

They wanted me to be Paul Butler's assistant. I wasn't going to be decorated as deputy director as such, but I felt I should be paid more than I was being offered. Anyway, I finally agreed to take a lesser salary conditionally that I would do it on a three months basis, and that way Paul Butler would have an opportunity to find out whether he liked me, whether he could work with me, or what. And I could also decide whether I would stay. And I figured in three months they would adjust my salary accordingly, or pay my way back to Los Angeles. So I stayed there--

Ingersoll: And they made the adjustment?

Chavoor: Oh, yes, they made the adjustment. I was there until May, 1957. The reason I left--

Ingersoll: Excuse me before you speak of leaving, What were you doing primarily in Paul Butler's office?

Chavoor: I was really his right arm, and I was more or less doing administrative work, and also being involved directly in the preliminary work of setting up the convention of 1956 in Chicago. I had to make all the arrangements for the staff, and so forth, and then go out and be right there during the convention, right next door to Paul Butler to handle problems and things. There was a convention manager who was there all the time. The staff from the Democratic National Committee in Washington didn't go out until just a couple of weeks before the convention itself.

Ingersoll: You were pretty responsible for seeing that things ran smoothly as far as the organization was concerned in those later days.

Chavoor: Yes. And actually my leaving started when Helen asked me on the telephone one day, "What happens to you if Paul Butler is not reelected chairman?" At each convention they elect, or name, a chairman. And what happens is that the Democratic nominee indicates the person that he would like to be the chairman. And I said, "If Paul Butler goes, and he's no longer chairman of the committee, then I leave too." Because, even though I had not been one of Paul Butler's people at the onset, I'm now labeled as one. A label which I wear proudly, because he was an exemplary human being. He was dedicated, and he was just a fine, fine person, and it was a great experience I had working with him, and for him.

So, Helen said, "Bockey (her brother Walter Gahagan) wants somebody in the New York office." They had a dredging operation in Venezuela at the time, and as a matter of fact it was a world-wide dredging corporation. My friends here in Washington had been pressing me to leave the committee because after two years or more you start carrying scars. I remember after I went through some testing and so forth, and went to New York with the Gahagan Company, some of my friends said, "We said leave the committee, we didn't say leave Washington." [Laughs]

Ingersoll: They would very much have liked to have had you stay, I imagine.

Chavoor: I remember there was a push on at the time to remove Paul Butler as the chairman. Verda Barnes, who was a very dear friend of mine, and who has worked until recently as Senator Frank Church's administrative assistant, and I worked like beavers at the convention trying to put something together so that Paul Butler would get reelected, because she as well as other people, many other people, felt that he had done a tremendous job. We



Chavoor: succeeded--he was reelected. And we feel that we were instrumental in that, in getting the thing off the ground. We had to go to people that we knew had the power and the clout, and who could do it.

Ingersoll: You had built up quite a few people in Washington whom you knew by that time.

Chavoor: Yes, and of course I knew the members of the Democratic National Committee, those who represented each of the states. I knew those who would be for him and those who wouldn't be for him. That was quite an experience. I came back fifteen pounds less than when I left.

Ingersoll: Oh, you must have worked night and day.

Chavoor: I think I averaged about two hours sleep a night.

Ingersoll: For how long a period of time would that have been?

Chavoor: For a good ten days.

Ingersoll: And, as with Helen, you just threw everything you had into it.

Chavoor: You're there and there's something to be done. And it was fun. It was a challenge. And it was great. And I'd do it all over again. [Laughs]

Ingersoll: Did you continue working in Paul Butler's office, or did you go to the Gahagan Dredging Co.?

Chavoor: I went to the Gahagan Dredging Co. in May 1957, and I stayed with the company until my father died in '63. In the interim we moved from New York. We--I always say the collective "we," you'd think it was mine. The dredging company was moved from New York to Tampa. The operational part of it--the engineering department, the purchasing department, went to Tampa. The insurance and the financial office stayed in New York. And I moved the company to Tampa.

Ingersoll: That must have been a huge job. How many employees? Were you responsible for getting them moved there?

Chavoor: Well, there weren't that many, but I went down to Tampa, I looked at the space. One of the engineers lived in Tampa, Frank Bryant. He and I looked at space, and we made the decisions. Then we designed the office, how it was to be done. And I worked out the transportation, the moving, the per diem allowance, et cetera. I really did all of that. I think they opened the office on



Chavoor: June 1, 1960, and they walked into the office and the telephones were working, the furniture was there, and we went to business. I did some hiring of staff, too. We took one of the girls from the New York office, and I was there, and then the rest of the staff, the support staff, we hired.

Then by '63, the Venezuelan operation was finished, it was closing down. The Gahagan family was moving back to the States-- I went househunting for the Gahagans and found the house for them to live in. Anyway, Marion Stapleton who had been with the company a long time, and still is Walter Gahagan's assistant, was coming back from Venezuela, and at that point my father died. I went back to Tampa after the funeral and told Walter I was leaving. He said--he was crushed.

I said, "Walter, you can't have Marion Stapleton and Evie Chavoor in the same office. Marion has been with the firm for years, and she's a tremendous gal, and just great, and you don't need me. Thank you, it's very kind of you, and very generous of you, but you really don't need me." Anyway, I went back to Los Angeles to be with my mother, and run the house. And that's when I went to work for the Wyman law firm.

Ingersoll: And that was for how long a period?

Chavoor: Almost five years.

Ingersoll: Five years back in Los Angeles. And Washington called you back again?

Chavoor: You can't go home again. So I came back to Washington. It was in 1968, and I was looking for something--sort of a stopgap, interim thing, until I could know what I wanted to do. I tried to get a job with the Humphrey campaign--through the Democratic National Committee, and it just didn't work out.

I was staying with my friend Verda at her apartment, and I was just ready to say, "Okay, to hell with all of this, I'm going back to Los Angeles." And there was an ad in the paper, a classified ad, that Verda had seen (she'd been scouring the papers) and she said, "Why don't you go on this interview?" I had never gone on an interview with an employment agency in my life.

"What have you got to lose?" Verda said. "It's not going to cost you any money." I said, "I'm leaving tomorrow." She said, "Leave the next day." So, anyway, I went on the interview. It took some time to get the job and I went back to Los Angeles,

Chavoor: and there were telephone calls back and forth. And that's when I went to work for the law firm of Covington & Burling, where I was for eight-and-a-half years. And which I just left in November.

Ingersoll: Until your present job?

Chavoor: Yes.

Ingersoll: And your present job is what, Evie?

Chavoor: I'm on the support staff of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. This committee was organized, and authorized, to function by the Senate as the aftermath of the Church committee. It was a temporary committee that Senator Church chaired that investigated the CIA and the intelligence community. This was the result of what happened with the Watergate hearings when it became known all the things that were going on in the CIA.

So after the Church committee had done its investigation and filed its report, it was concluded that for the first time in the history of the CIA, which was organized in 1947, an oversight committee was needed, because the CIA operated independently, answerable only to the president of the United States. It became enmeshed in the National Security Council, the FBI, and the whole thing of Watergate. And when certain things came out, they just felt this couldn't go on. So that's when the oversight committee was established.

Ingersoll: What are your responsibilities?

Chavoor: I'm a member of the support staff--I'm just a support staff member.

Ingersoll: Research?

Chavoor: I've been whatever they assign me. And that I don't talk about. I can't talk about it. We don't talk about it.

Ingersoll: Sure. You mentioned once before when we weren't taping, I think, that as you looked back on your career, you felt that you had always been willing, been happy to be a support kind of person. Somebody behind a person with more power. Could you elaborate on that?

Chavoor: When Helen was going to run for the Senate, some of the people, labor people in her district, came and suggested to me that maybe I should be the one to run for her seat. I said, "No." If Helen went to the Senate, that's where I wanted to be. And also I didn't feel that I would be able to get elected because there



Chavoor: were other qualified people who were in the political arena who were members of the state legislature, who had been in the forefront. And I'd never been in the forefront. Mine was a secondary role, and I just didn't think I would have enough clout. But primarily I felt that if Helen went to the Senate I wanted to be there. And that's where I would feel more comfortable.

This is a commentary on me, and so it is. This is where I feel more comfortable, and I suppose if things had evolved in a "normal" fashion I probably would have wanted to have a family, and have a home of my own, and so forth. And again, maybe this is a throwback on the way I was brought up. According to my mother, you see, I was nothing because I wasn't married. And I couldn't sew.

Ingersoll: But you always felt a great deal of family responsibility, it seems, through the years to your own family of birth. You mentioned several times going back to Los Angeles to help out when there was an emergency there.

Chavoor: Well, there were two things. I'm a take-charge kind of person which is plus and minus. For instance, between the '52 election in which Blair Moody was defeated and my return to Washington in '53, my father developed muscular rheumatism. He was in the produce business and he had boxes and things to lift, and he couldn't do it. And I remember during that period, my uncle, his brother, who was also in the same business, would come in the morning and take his truck to the produce market at the crack of dawn, load it, and come back. And then my father and I would go on the truck, and I would drive the truck.

Ingersoll: And that made it possible for him to keep going, didn't it?

Chavoor: Yes, and I did that for several months. And my mother, of course, had a fit. Then the other job came along, and my father was better.

When I went back in '54 to work with Roz Wyman, my sister, who had had several miscarriages, was pregnant again, against the doctor's orders. She was flat on her back, and so I was literally carrying my sister to the bathroom, bathing her and so forth. I suppose it is because I am a strong person, and I just take charge.

And I recall when they offered me the job with Paul Butler, my father said, "Why do you want to do that? Even if they pay you more money than you're making here, with your expenses and everything, you'd be better off staying here." And I said, "If



Chavoor: I stay here, I will not only be a crutch, but you're all going to be helpless." Because it got to the point that they wouldn't do anything. They'd say, "We'll have to wait until Evie comes home." And that's ridiculous.

So, when my father died there was a lot of soul searching that went on. There was a discussion between my brother and me as to what we were going to do and how we were going to care for my mother in this huge house, and so forth. I stayed in Los Angeles two weeks during that time, and it was a question of either my brother taking over or my taking over. My sister was not in the situation where it was feasible for her to take over.

And I remember waking up one day, and I knew I was going to come home. And I called my sister-in-law, and said, "Okay, I'm coming back." And then my brother called me because he said, "Are you sure? Are you sure this is what you want to do?" "Yes, this is what I want to do." It was just the normal flow of events. It wasn't such a great thing. I have a very supportive brother, and a very supportive sister-in-law.

Ingersoll: I know you spoke of him before and the sort of life he's led, and his values.

Chavoor: I was there when I was needed. I didn't feel any burden.

Ingersoll: As you look back on it now, do you still feel it was the right thing to do? These kinds of responsibilities are the ones that women more than men feel perhaps that they should hang on to, carry through.

Chavoor: It wasn't that that motivated me. It was what was going to be feasible. What was practical. What would be the best thing. It didn't matter. My brother has a smaller house. If it had been necessary, if I had said, "No, I'm not going to come back because I don't choose to, or it's not to my liking, or isn't going to be suitable, my brother would have bought a bigger house, or done whatever he had to do. Or he would have considered the next best thing. It wasn't that at all. I knew Marion was coming back to Tampa when the Venezuelan office of the Gahagan company was closed. It just was the normal course of events.

There was something similar--in terms of the normal course of events--when I left the Fortas law firm, and Abe Fortas was upset about my going. He said, "Do you really want to? Do you really want to go back on the Hill?" When I told him it was for Blair Moody, who was also a friend of theirs and a client, he said, "Okay, well, I understand it."

Chavoor: At that time, Dorothy Bailey, who was teaching at the American University, had been a government employee at a very high level, and was a leader in some kind of activity. I don't recall now whether it had to do with unionizing, or what. The government had terminated her, and her appeal to be reinstated to the job was being handled by the law firm of Arnold, Fortas, and Porter, which was the kind of thing that they would do, and normally had done and still do.

They were handling the case before the Supreme Court, and during that period, right around that time, a decision came down from the Supreme Court; it was a four and four decision, neither yes nor no. And at that time I believe the powers that be at American U. felt they should not, under the circumstances, continue having her on the staff because they had to look to people for donations for grants and so on, who might not approve of having her on the staff of the university. And so, I walked into the office and Abe Fortas said, "Evie, God works his wonders in many mysterious ways." What is that saying? My leaving the firm permitted them to offer Dorothy Bailey my job.

So, to return to the other episode, there would have had to be made a decision at the Gahagan company at some point or another. You can't have two take-charge persons in a relatively small organization. So, my going home wasn't because I felt the responsibilities as a woman.

#### Discrimination Very Slight; Importance of Politics

Ingersoll: Let's pursue a little more the idea of a woman and a career. You mentioned the time when you went to work for Paul Butler and there was the question of salary. Were there other times in your career that you were being discriminated against or felt that you were being discriminated against because you were a woman?

Chavoor: I never really thought about it as such. I had one experience in one of my jobs where I felt that I was--I didn't feel it, I knew, and I said it. I called it a male chauvinist organization.

Ingersoll: Was that in government or--

Chavoor: No, it wasn't government, it was private industry. I suppose, even when I went to work for Gene Wyman, there was some discrimination. When I asked whatever I wanted for my salary, he said something about, "Gee, that's more than we paid a CPA that we had"--who happened to be a man. I said, "Well, hire him again."



- Chavoor: [Laughs] I don't know whether it was because I was a woman, or whether it was a little more than anybody could swallow. They didn't stop to think that I was a woman when they asked me to be Paul Butler's assistant. Gene Wyman didn't really stop to think whether I was a woman and not a man when he wanted to hire me. That was an overture from him.
- Ingersoll: Am I right that you were the first woman in the job with the Democratic National Committee?
- Chavoor: I was the first woman assistant to the chairman. There have been and are women vice-chairmen, who were high up in the political hierarchy. I was in a staff position.
- Ingersoll: But as a staff assistant to the director, that was the first time that they had a woman.
- Chavoor: To the chairman, yes. I don't think they ever had another woman in that particular spot. The chairman has to decide how he wants his organization setup, his office setup, and Helen misstates it, she always says I was the first deputy. Well, it was not a deputy, and also I was not the first deputy, even if I were a deputy.
- Ingersoll: Has being a woman been a benefit at any point, particularly in the political arena?
- Chavoor: I don't think so. I don't think it had any bearing on it as far as I was concerned, except in terms of whether they were thinking of a woman to be a secretary or something. They just don't think in terms of a man being a secretary. And I think being a secretary is a very admirable profession.
- Ingersoll: There certainly are many, many ways that you can influence what is going on, aren't there?
- Chavoor: Yes. Then there are secretaries and there are secretaries. I don't care what your title is. To me what's important is that you like what you're doing, and you're doing a good job.
- Ingersoll: Certainly both those things are important. Let's pursue the liking what you're doing a little bit. Have you had people sometimes say, "Why do you work in that bureaucracy in Washington?"
- Chavoor: I don't know if it has been put to me in that way exactly. Yes, this whole feeling about--this whole feeling about government bureaucracy, and government employees are all slouches and are all lazy. I know some lazy people in private industry. [Laughs]



Ingersoll: And you're working eighteen hours a day.

Chavoor: I had a responsible job. That's just part of me.

Ingersoll: How do you feel about government? Particularly as a place to work.

Chavoor: Let me say there are many people in government who are doing a tremendous job. They've a contribution to make, and they're making it. I feel that government and politics-- So many times people come and say, "Politics, and politicians, it's a denigrating vocation," or whatever. And their whole tone of voice is one of "Oh, you're a politician. Oh, you're in politics." Well, politics is what makes this government go. Politics affects our whole way of life. We think it doesn't, but it does. It affects what we're paying for clothes, for food, and where we live, and how we live. So, to me, when they say "politics" and use that tone of voice I think it's terrible.

It's the art of government, and if they look upon government and frown upon that, and call it a bureaucracy, and what have you and downgrade that, that too affects what we are. Our government is us, we're the United States of America. We're different, we're unique, we're the best democracy in the whole world. We are a form of government that has never survived anywhere else. And no other government has.

Ingersoll: And this was what Helen wanted to survive, and what you were really introduced to so early in your whole career, wasn't it? And it was a woman who had gotten into it because she felt this was really the stuff of life, and a place where one could really have an influence on shaping this whole stuff of life.

Chavoor: Because she did it before she got to Congress. She exercised her rights and was an influence on the political atmosphere in California, on the migrants in California, and the whole bit. And so she then brought that to the Congress. And it's terribly important, it's vitally important. There are just too many who sit about and think, oh well, it doesn't matter what I do. Or who don't care what happens. Who don't care about those who are less fortunate. Who are only concerned about, "I did it, let them do it." Who don't realize that maybe they didn't have as much chance.

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## MY DEMOCRATIC CREDO

### SPEECH

OF

HON. HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS

#### BLOW UP OR GROW UP

Mrs. DOUGLAS of California. Mr. Speaker, I think we all know that communism is no real threat to the democratic institutions of our country.

But the irresponsible way the term "communism" is used to falsely label the things the majority of us believe in can be very dangerous.

I do not think communism in Russia need prevent international cooperation in building the peace, any more than it prevented international cooperation in winning the war.

I know that the road ahead is not without difficulty or without its vexing problems, but, if we could solve the difficulties and the problems that arose during the war, surely we can solve them in peace.

We solved them in war because we had to. If we had not, we would all now be slaves of the Axis Nations.

We will solve them in peace if we fully realize the grim fact that, if we do not, civilization has run its course.

We have reached a point where war can no longer be the final recourse. We have reached a point where we either grow up or blow up.

If it is blow up, the issues over which we struggle today are meaningless.

#### JEALOUS FOR DEMOCRACY

I have asked to talk about communism. But I am also going to talk about democracy—democracy, which I strive daily to live—democracy, which is the only form of society in which I believe—the principles of which were fed to me with my first spoon of cereal—democracy, which my forefathers helped establish on this great continent.

I shall talk about democracy because it is democracy that we believe in and live by—or should live by. We are in-

terested in communism as a system that challenges democracy. I am not afraid of that challenge.

I do not think we value democracy highly enough. The great mass of the American people will never exchange democracy for communism as long as democracy fulfills its promise. The best way to keep communism out of our country is to keep democracy in it—to keep constantly before our eyes and minds the achievements and the goals which we, a free people, have accomplished and intend to accomplish in the future under our own democratic system.

I am jealous for democracy. I do not like to see the things that democracy can accomplish credited to communism. Through the years democracy has given the people of the United States more freedom and a higher standard of living than any other system that we know—and it has done so with less inequity, less persecution, less infringement on the rights of free thinking, free speech, and free action than under any other form of government anywhere else in the world. I do not want the things that democracy has done ascribed to anything other than the democratic process.

I am jealous for the school system we have built under democracy, and I do not want its extension, including fair salaries for teachers, day nurseries, school-lunch programs, and Federal aid to education, called communism.

I am jealous for the reputation of our democratic institutions to achieve a high level of employment, and I do not want to see measures for increasing that employment attributed to communism.

I am jealous for my belief, and the belief of millions of other Americans, that in our democracy the Government is the servant of the people, and that, as the servant of the people, it will protect the people—all of us, Protestant, Catholic, Jew, or gentile; black, white, or yellow. I do not like to have that belief, the



very cornerstone of our greatness, disavowed and called communistic.

I am jealous for that greatest of all our institutions the American home. I pay my disrespect to those short-sighted individuals who called our housing program for our returning service men and women, the program which would have helped millions of them to start their homes, communistic.

I believe now, and I shall always believe, that this Government of the people is capable of self-growth, is capable of making whatever adjustments are needed in a world that has changed so greatly since the days when my great-grandfather, the Reverend William Harrison Gahagan, helped found Dayton, Ohio.

I do not claim that democracy, as we now know it, is perfect, but I know that it has the capacity to remedy its own imperfections, and I do not want to hear each remedy called communism.

#### REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PEOPLE

I have a respect that amounts to reverence for our kind of Government and for this body of which I am privileged to be a Member.

As a child, the Congress of the United States was to me the symbol of freedom. It was the embodiment of all the great phrases and words that I had heard spoken in my home and at school, words I memorized in my heart and mind.

"Sweet land of liberty," "We, the people of the United States," "One Nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all," "A Government of the people, by the people, for the people," "the land of the free and the home of the brave," "From every mountainside let freedom ring!"

As a very little girl I stood holding my father's hand and looked upon the Members of this body. In my childish way I thought to myself how wonderful to be a Member of the Congress of the United States—to speak for the people—to be a part of the people's Government.

In the years that followed, I, as many other Members of this House earned in

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a few weeks what we are paid here in a year. But the privilege and satisfaction of becoming a Member of this House are greater than any I ever enjoyed outside. For I still feel now, as I felt as a child, that the confidence of people in their Representatives whom they have freely chosen, is in itself the greatest reward—and cannot be measured by any material standards.

That confidence demands that we give to our role our hearts, our minds, the whole of all our talents. It is here, so long as we are permitted to serve as Members of this House, that the greatest of all possible rewards is found. For the greatest of all possible trust has been given to us, a trust, to protect the liberties of the people and fulfill their hopes.

This is the role, as a representative of the people, which I cherish above all I have ever held, or could ever dream of holding.

#### CAUSES OF COMMUNISM

It is as a representative of the people, a democratic people, who believe in the principles and future of democracy—that I now speak about communism.

There is no word in the world today more misused or misunderstood. I, for one, would not pretend to give a final definition of the word.

I have no special contribution to make on the subject. I am not a student of communism. I have not been to Russia.

That, however, does not mean that I have not thought about communism and tried to understand it and take an objective view toward it. One of the most important things today is for the American people to try to understand the Russian people and the Russian people to understand us.

I think we do a disservice to democracy when we dismiss communism as the devil's handiwork. Of course, there is competition between democracy and communism in the world today.

There is no doubt in my mind that the result will continue to be the tri-



umph of democracy in the world if we spend our energy and genius in demonstrating to the world what democracy can do.

One-sixth of the globe today, an area as large as the United States, India, and China combined is inhabited by people who are living under a form of State socialism known as communism.

Primarily as the result of geographic isolation, these people since the Middle Ages had lived under the cruelest, most barbaric autocracy in world history. Under the czars, the nobility held huge estates. There was a relatively small trading class and working class of artisans. In 1917, when the revolution began, there were only 10,000,000 industrial workers in the whole country. There were many more millions of peasants who worked the land with the most primitive tools and methods; mentally and physically debased, almost to the level of animals, and who until less than a hundred years ago were bought and sold like the animals on the land of the big estates on which they lived and worked.

When Lenin with the philosophy of Marx and Engel arrived in Petrograd in the midst of a revolt against the czars and the war, there was small wonder that the Russian people followed him who promised bread and freedom.

In other words, communism was born out of hunger, slavery, illiteracy, superstition, degradation.

#### WE HAVE DEMOCRACY

But, communism has no place in our society. We have something better. We have democracy. Communist methods are foreign to ours. Their policies are superimposed from the top and you take it from the top whether you like it or not.

Under our democratic system, programs are proposed from many sources in the community. A candidate running for office stands for a certain program, and the people elect him or reject him on the basis of that program. In other

words, the people themselves select or reject what is good for them. We do not believe that one man or a group of men can save the people. We believe that the people save themselves.

The Soviets have never developed certain rights which to us are fundamental—the civil rights we cherish, the political rights we so boisterously and vigorously enjoy. They have sacrificed the competitive free-enterprise system we believe in.

Since the war I think we all must admit that some good things have been accomplished under communism for the Russian people.

But, communism is the receiver which takes over when bankruptcy takes place.

It is our job, not only to see that bankruptcy never takes place here, but that through democratic processes the welfare and security of the people which are what make a society solvent increase day by day

#### FIGHTING WINDMILLS

The fear of communism in this country is not rational. And that irrational fear of communism is being deliberately used in many quarters to blind us to our real problems. The spreading of this fear is in fact propaganda for communism.

I am nauseated and sick to death of the vicious and deliberate way the word Communist has been forged into a weapon and used against those who organize and raise their voices in defense of democratic ideals—of hearing the very program which was initiated by Franklin Roosevelt and which the majority of the American people voted for in four successive national elections and to which President Truman has dedicated himself in his twenty-one point program called Communistic by those who seek to defeat the majority will of the American people.

Communism could successfully invade only a weakened democracy. A vigorous democracy—a democracy in which there are freedom from want, freedom from fear, freedom of religion and freedom

of speech—would never succumb to communism or any other ism.

Our fight is not against the windmill of communism in America. Rather it is against those who would make a treadmill of democracy through special privilege, bigotry, and intolerance.

Those who serve democracy and the future of democracy best are those who believe that full employment and fair employment practices can be achieved under our free enterprise system and who fight for full employment and fair employment practices through the democratic process.

It is up to us, the people, to show that we can have full employment and full production and freedom at the same time. That is a test democracy faces.

#### FREE ENTERPRISE

Nobody believes in free enterprise or its future more than I do. I have had all the benefits of this free enterprise system. I was bred in a family that handed down its business from father to son, a family that believed and believes today that individual initiative is the source of our economic vitality. I had every advantage and every opportunity that a child born into that kind of family would have.

It is because I know what education and opportunity and the respect of the community mean in the development of human beings that I fight for them for everyone.

I have never been in a breadline. I have never had to live on a ditch bank. I am not one of the millions who has never known a doctor's care.

I was not one of those 200,000 women a year who give birth to their children without medical attention. I do not belong to a minority—at least, I do not think the Irish are considered a minority in America any more.

But I have been in the slums of America. I have been to the ditch bank and have seen the people who come out of the cities because there was no place for them there. I have seen the people who

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were blown off, tractored off, or because of lack of markets were pushed off the land.

I have seen their miserable cars with all their worldly belongings strapped to them wending their weary way through State after State, millions in all, hunting for a job, hunting for somewhere beside the road to lay their heads.

I have seen shanty towns where the dust blinded and choked—where there was no water to relieve the thirst—no water to wash sick children, or when it rained rivers ran through the tents or the improvised shanties.

I have seen children with sore eyes and swollen bellies. I have looked deep into the despairing eyes of fathers and mothers without jobs—or hope of jobs. I have seen minorities humiliated and denied full citizenship. And I tell you that we betray the basic principle upon which this Government of free people was founded unless this Government of the people finds a way by which all the people can live out their lives in dignity and decency.

#### FREE FOR EVERYBODY

Yes, I believe in free enterprise. I believe in it so much that the whole object of my participation in government as a representative of the people is to make it free, free for everybody.

It is a good thing to own your own business, your own farm. The problem that confronts this Congress is that not enough people own their own businesses and their own farms. The test again and again is whether we side with the great monopolies or with the people. The great monopolies are suffocating free enterprise and, if not halted in their growth, will in the end destroy not only their own dynasties but democracy itself.

Only 10,000 persons own one-quarter and 75,000 persons own one-half of all the corporate stock in this country. Only 61,000 persons out of 130,000,000 collect half the dividends.

The war Franklin D. Roosevelt talked about in 1936 is still going on. It is, as he said, "a war for the survival of de-



mocracy," and the battle should not rage around the bogus issue of communism but around the real issue of monopoly and the exploitation of the people and their resources.

#### MONOPOLIES

Monopolies did not build America. It was not monopoly which built our great industrial economy. It was competitive enterprises which later were too often strangled by the forces of monopoly. Typically, our plants, factories, mines, and mills were built by enterprising businessmen, creating income for their respective communities. But after the facility was built, too often it was taken over by the large combine, the Wall Street group.

Not only did monopoly fail to contribute materially to the development of our industrial structure, it actually promoted illegal price fixing and the restriction of production which resulted in underconsumption and unemployment.

Monopoly, through cartels, contributed seriously to our industrial unpreparedness for war by restricting the production and distribution of such vital materials as magnesium, synthetic rubber, aviation gasoline, and electrical equipment and many other products.

Monopoly deeply affects the spiritual and economic lives of those who live in communities which it dominates.

In a study prepared by the Smaller War Plants Corporation and printed as Senate Document 165, a comparison was made of the levels of civic welfare in what were termed "big-business" as against "small-business" cities. It was found that in the big-business cities—those in which most of the working population was employed by a few large plants or absentee-owned corporations—the level of civic welfare was lower than in small-business cities—those in which most of the workers were employed in many small, locally owned businesses.

It was found that the chance that a baby would die within 1 year after birth was considerably greater in big- than in small-business cities.

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Slums were more prevalent in the "big business" cities.

The "big business" cities had less home ownership; they spent less per capita on health, on public recreation, and on public libraries; and they had a lower degree of church membership than did comparable "small business" cities of the same size located in the same area, possessing the same type of population.

These are only a few manifestations of the lower levels of civil welfare which were found to prevail in the "big business" cities.

The alternative to this concentration is its very opposite—more privately owned business, more employers competing for the respect of the community, more participation in ownership.

Democracy cannot long survive when the people permit their lives to be dominated—economically or politically—by a powerful few.

#### MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK

We must make democracy work. We must realize the greatness that is in America. We are proud of our past and proudest because of what we can build upon that past. We do not want to turn our eyes backward and to keep the dead hand of the past upon our growth. And above all we want to shake off the deadening hand of monopoly.

We must reverse the trend to monopoly. We must enlarge the opportunities for all, with our magnificent capacities for production and distribution. It is in this atmosphere of hope and freedom that we became great and shall go forward to new leadership in the world. It is in this setting that we can undertake to provide new security and well-being for all our people, rather than much for the few and little for the many.

To make democracy work we must recognize its real enemies. And one of the most dangerous of its enemies is intolerance borne of fear and loss of faith in America.

Intolerance which poisons the sweet air of liberty.



I do not agree with everything that is said. But I will fight with the last ounce of my strength for the right of people to say what they will.

#### PRIVILEGED TO MAKE MISTAKES

One of the great privileges of democracy is the privilege to make mistakes—the privilege to say foolish things, the privilege to expound ideas with which others violently disagree, the privilege to say them without being tracked down and labeled as subversive, the privilege to criticize our Representatives mercilessly, whoever they may be, and, next to the secret ballot, the greatest privileges of all are the right to organize and defeat or elect candidates to public office. The whole history of American politics is the history of vigorous and often violent disagreements.

We believe and we have shown by experience that we can afford these luxuries—these luxuries which are a necessity of democracy—because in a people's government balance is found and kept in the final voice of the majority; the majority which at all times defends the minority. There is no danger in letting people have their say. We have proved that. There is only danger when you try to stop them from saying it.

This, the most powerful nation on earth, stands today as irrefutable proof that there is no danger in a conglomeration of peoples and ideas freely expressed. In fact, out of the very conglomeration a rich harvest, which is the growth of America, has been reaped.

#### SUSPICION

There is a danger in the hysteria that always follows war. That danger is suspicion—suspicion that breeds in ignorance, thrives on bigotry, reaches epidemic proportions on hysteria.

Tom Paine said:

Suspicion is the companion of mean souls and the bane of all good society.

This is true at home and abroad, as true in 1946 as it was in 1776. And

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former Secretary of State and War Henry L. Stimson wrote a few days ago:

The chief lesson I have learned in a long life is that the only way to make a man trustworthy is to trust him; and the surest way to make him untrustworthy is to distrust him and show your distrust.

Mr. Stimson said this in reference to the atomic bomb and our international relations, but what is true of international relations is also true here at home.

We, the Members of this body, will fail in our duty if we permit suspicion of another's purpose to divert us from our own purpose—that of making democracy function at full efficiency for our own people.

#### WE CANNOT FAIL

To be sure there are Communists in America. There are a few people in America who believe the free enterprise system has run its course. As I have made clear, here today, I share no such belief. But to attack each new development in the progress of American democracy, as communism, is to dig the grave of government of the people, by the people, for the people.

If we succeed in the practice of democracy communism will never take over, as some faint-hearted but loud-mouthed have proclaimed.

We cannot fail if we carry forward into the future the principles which have made America great.

#### THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN

Mr. Speaker, this body must always be loyal to the principles of its founders and the teachings of its fathers.

It must never yield to the tyranny of bigotry.

It must never succumb to the rantings of the demagog.

It must always be the forum where justice is dispensed and intolerance is despised.

It must be the protector of free speech and the guardian of free worship.

It must never become an arena where class is arrayed against class—where race hatreds are bred and suspicions nourished.

We, the Members of this Congress—chosen by a free people to protect their rights and to bring to reality their hopes and faiths—are not bigots. We do not believe in name calling. We do not agree that everyone who disagrees with

us should be hunted down like a criminal, denied his civil rights, and deprived of his ability to earn a living.

We, the Members of this House, do not believe that Capitol Hill is a hill on which to kindle a fiery cross but rather one on which to display the shining cross which since Calvary has been to all the world the symbol of the brotherhood of man.

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SPEECH  
OF  
HON. HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS  
OF CALIFORNIA  
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
March 29, 1946

## Republican Techniques in the 1950 California Senatorial Race Between Helen Gahagan Douglas and Richard Nixon.

In analyzing any campaign of which one is not a member, one is always faced with the problem of differentiating between two types of knowledge - that which can be proven with facts, evidence, and statistics, and that which is the result of hints, innuendos, instinct, and logical conclusions based on a given situation and results. Particularly in the campaign waged by Nixon for Senator, where most of the campaigning, by its nature, had to be subtle and undercover, it is difficult to separate these two types of knowledge. However, for the sake of complete accuracy in this report, I will make every effort to distinguish between that which can be proved, and that which cannot.

### Nixon Campaign Based on Actual Evidence

#### I. Statewide Public Campaign:

##### A. Attack

1. One aspect of the Nixon campaign in 1950 was the over-all State-wide campaign. This campaign was the usual type of campaign which was waged on radio, television, in the newspapers and by Mr. Nixon himself. All the people of the State were exposed to it, and it was directed to all the people of the State. It was based on one single issue - that Helen Douglas was a Communist. This was never flatly stated in such a bold manner, but the obvious implication was unavoidable. It was stated that Mrs. Douglas followed the policies of the Communists. This one issue was played during the entire campaign, and was the only state-wide public issue. In attacking Mrs. Douglas on this issue they used three arguments to support their accusation. 1) Mrs. Douglas' voting record in relation to Vito MarcAntonio's voting record. 2) Mrs. Douglas' vote on Greek-Turkish aid. 3) Mrs. Douglas' vote on the Un-American Activities Committee appropriations.

2. Democrats for Nixon. To support this accusation of Communism the Nixon Campaign also used a group called Democrats for Nixon. This was a group of prominent persons who were registered Democrats, who came out publicly in support of Nixon. This support was published in the newspapers and many of them went on the radio. The entire pitch was that they were, in this particular instance, switching their loyalty because of Mrs. Douglas' Communist sympathies. This group was headed by George Creel, who has supported every Republican candidate since 1940. Most of the other members of this group had a similar history. It must be remembered that due to the cross-filing system in California elections, a person's party affiliation on his voters registration has no real meaning. Mr. Creel, and his associates on the Democrats for Nixon Committee have become professional Democrats for Republicans, and formed similar committees here in 1952 for both Knowland and Eisenhower. It is also generally known, that Mr. Creel was liberally reimbursed for his endorsement, but there is no available proof of this. However it was rumored that he received \$40,000 for his endorsement of Nixon.



## B. Positive Campaign.

In addition to the campaign showing Mrs. Douglas' weakness on the Communist issue, there was also a very strong campaign showing Nixon as strong on the Communist issue. Many radio and television broadcasts during the campaign were devoted to Nixon's role in the Alger Hiss case. But most of the work in this regard was done prior to the actual campaign. Long before the heat of the campaign, pamphlets of Nixon and the Hiss case were widely circulated in the State by mail, not as campaign literature, but as a service from Nixon's Congressional Office. Also before the actual campaigning Nixon toured the State speaking to various groups and organizations on the Hiss case - again not as a candidate, but as a member of the Un-American Activities Committee. This technique of laying ground work prior to the campaign, in a sense, creating a consumer's acceptance of later campaign issues before the actual campaign, was a technique used frequently by the Nixon campaign and we shall meet it again in this report later on when we discuss the organizational techniques.

## C. Role of the Newspapers in State-wide Public Campaign.

The newspapers, almost 100% sympathetic to Mr. Nixon, gave complete daily coverage to this part of the campaign, both in their news columns and editorials, while maintaining a virtual black-out on news from the Douglas campaign. (A survey made by Stanford University Journalism Department bears this out.) They showed an overwhelming number of column inches and number of news stores for Nixon as compared to Douglas.

## II. Semi-public Campaign

In addition to the over-all State campaign, there were certain techniques used in local areas which were apparent to the public in those areas. They supplemented the broad attack of Communism. They took the form of newspaper ads and handbills listing the casualties in Korea from that area, and then tying Mrs. Douglas up with them. For example - This is what the Communists are doing to your boys in Korea while Mrs. Douglas votes with them at home, and then listing her votes in common with MarcAntonio.

## III. Hidden Campaign

The hidden campaign was actually the core of the Nixon campaign. It consisted of organizers in special interest groups, in economic, racial and religious groups. These organizers were paid by the Nixon campaign, but they were not known as members of the Nixon campaign. This was essential because it enabled them to spread lies and gossip for which the Nixon campaign itself was not held responsible. (A statement in the paper that the weekly payroll in Northern California of the Nixon campaign was \$80,000 has never been denied.) These organizers functioned in many ways, all of which I am certain are not known to us. The ways in which we do know they functioned are as follows:

A. Neighborhood meetings for women at which a prominent woman spoke, such as novelist Kathleen Norris. Never a political person.

1. One woman in the neighborhood called the other women in the area and invited them to the meeting on the basis that it was a gathering to get to know each other and, for example, Mrs. Norris, the novelist, would also be there. No mention of Nixon or the campaign.
  2. At the actual meeting the speaker would, in a homey fashion, point out, incidentally, that either she knew ~~of~~<sup>or</sup> had seen Mrs. Douglas or had met Mrs. Douglas, and that Mrs. Douglas admitted she was a Communist, or was a hysterical, neurotic woman, or that her private life was not all that it should be.
- B. Organizers in special interest groups and special area groups - Negroes, veterans, Catholics, agriculture, etc.
1. Organizers chosen from within the group, so had a certain personal relationship with members of the group.
  2. Fact that their affiliation with the Nixon campaign was not known kept personal relationship from being destroyed.
  3. Organizers in certain groups, wherever possible, paved the way for the actual campaign by arranging for the groups to have speakers and programs which in a non-partisan way laid the ground work for the Nixon campaign-created the consumer acceptance of the later Nixon campaign issues.
  4. These organizers, through their personal contacts in these groups, spread lies and slander about Mrs. Douglas' and her husband's personal lives and political affiliations.
  5. They played upon the prejudices of the group anti-Negro, anti-Semitic, rural against urban, and other prejudices of the group.

Example: Organizers in the Negro districts played the tune that soon Negroes would be excluded from all labor unions, therefore they should vote against labor and Democrats. Pointed to one or two unions who do discriminate, and fabricated a plausible tale from that.

Example: Played upon anti-Semitic feelings to the extent that there was shocking amount of anti-Semitic talk around during the campaign - that anti-Semitic attacks were made upon the Douglas campaign.

During the campaign there was a fantastic increase in the mail circulation of anti-Semitic literature by Williams in the town of Santa Ana, supposedly a Gerald L. K. Smith follower.

[The above section B on organizers is the point at which the difficulty of proof enters in. The above examples are fact, the lies and playing on prejudice are fact. That supporters of the Nixon campaign acted in such a manner is fact. But I do not know in which instance it was a



paid organizer, or a volunteer, or merely a Nixon sympathizer who had no official connection with the Nixon campaign. I put them all in the classification of organizer because, whether they played the role intentionally or unwittingly, officially or unofficially, they were in fact, from a campaign standpoint, organizers for the Nixon campaign.

IV Aspects of Nixon campaign based on hearsay, which needs further substantiation.

A. Presence of Gerald L. K. Smith and Senator McCarthy in the southern part of the State.

1. Used in area where audience receptive.
2. Small, privately invited gatherings.
3. No apparent connection with the Nixon campaign.
4. Nixon publicly denied any connection with either of these men.

In conclusion it is necessary to point out that a full understanding of the effectiveness of the Nixon campaign is not possible without first realizing that the accusation of Communist sympathy against Mrs. Douglas made by her Democratic opponent in the primaries, Mr. Boddy, certainly gave credulity to the Nixon campaign which followed.





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HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS PROJECT

Charles A. Hogan

HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS: THE UNITED NATIONS  
NON-GOVERNMENTAL SECTION AND THE  
DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

An Interview Conducted by  
Amelia Fry  
in 1977

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CHARLES A. HOGAN  
*Photo by United Nations*



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## INTERVIEW HISTORY

Times of Interviews: May 4 and May 13, 1977.

Place of Interviews: The apartment of Charles A. Hogan, in San Francisco

Those Present: Charles A. Hogan and the interviewer.

## The Interview:

I found Charles A. Hogan comfortably ensconced in an apartment on Franklin Street in San Francisco, ready to discuss human rights, education, and world government. Significant achievement in all these areas made him a vital colleague in the productive world of Helen Gahagan Douglas. In addition to secure status in the fraternity of liberal leaders, he also proved to be possessed of a wry wit and gourmet cooking ability.

One can be forever intrigued with the question of how some persons manage to be present at the creation of significant movements and institutions time after time. Hogan can run up an impressive list of cases which bear the stamp of his nurturing and reliant defense: urban renewal (in the San Francisco Housing Association and in Washington, before World War II), adult education in Great Books and with Alexander Meiklejohn, the USO, California's American Civil Liberties Union, and the United Nations.

The first interview began at 10:30 in his apartment on the sunny spring morning of May 4, 1977. Because of his respect for and longtime friendship with Helen Gahagan Douglas, he had readily agreed to be recorded for the oral history series on her life. His interview adds a valuable segment to the circle of the Douglasses' associates included in the series. He started out apace on the recording and midway, true to his reputation, produced a splendid lunch of shrimp Coquilles St. Jacques. The wide-ranging interests embodied in his life history during that first session brought us together again on May 13, 1977, to focus on two main topics: the American Civil Liberties Union and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Throughout both interviews Helen Douglas appears in campaigns, in Congress, in speeches, at the United Nations, and at home.

From the moment he opened the door, his drollery furnished an added delight. Sitting back in an ample chair, he seemed to enjoy providing both recall and wry commentary. He looked like a rotund Irish Puck, which was fair warning that a dry statement might harbor a delayed-reaction twist. At times this interviewer, fearing that a cryptic remark would become an ambiguity

in the written transcript, made an effort to restate and clarify--but this only diluted his irony. (His answer, for example, to why the farmers wanted the Food and Agriculture Organization to be independent was, "Have you ever been to the Middle West? The people there--there's the answer.")

After the recording, Ingrid Scobie reviewed the transcript and checked identifications, added complete names, and presented him with questions to tighten meanings and add elucidations. These he deftly provided, returning the transcript promptly, in March, 1980, even volunteering to come over to the campus to discuss it if needed.

A few official records of the United Nations and of the California American Civil Liberties Union were used as background research, plus some previously related interviews conducted by the office. It should be noted, however, that the real treasure trove of sources is his own collection of papers on his United Nations work, stashed "here or in the building next door." They, and their collector, deserve systematic treatment in a more detailed memoir. His death on April 23, 1981, like Helen Gahagan Douglas's the previous year, leaves a widening gap among the protagonists of a colorful era of exuberant social change.

Amelia R. Fry  
Interviewer-Editor

7 May 1981  
Regional Oral History Office  
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XI HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS: THE UNITED NATIONS NON-GOVERNMENTAL  
SECTION AND THE DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

[Interview 1: May 4, 1977]  
[begin tape 1, side A]

Background: Broad Experiences and Alexander Meiklejohn

Fry: Where were you born?

Hogan: I was born in Oakland, California, in 1906. I was the last white child born in Oakland. My grandfather crossed the plains with an ox team, came to California in '52. Then he went back to Ireland via the Isthmus, married, went around the Horn to Australia. He and his wife didn't like Australia, where there was another gold rush, so he came back with her to San Francisco where my mother was born on the site of the Palace Hotel in 1862.

My father was in the lumber business in Oakland. That boomed, because 1906, the year I was born, was the year of the fire and everybody moved to Oakland. So the Hogans built Oakland. Then I went to Berkeley for college.

Fry: Wait. I'm waiting for you to explain your punch line of being the last white child born in Oakland.

Hogan: Well, it's all turned black.

Fry: Oh, okay. All right.

Hogan: And I went to Berkeley, finished there in '26, then went to Oxford for three years. And then returned to Berkeley and taught in the Philosophy Department for three years, did my graduate degree in '32, which was the year [Franklin D.] Roosevelt was elected. Then I did some teaching in the Extension Division of the university. Then I joined [Alexander] Meiklejohn in an experiment here in adult education done largely with Carnegie funds. Well, Pearl Harbor killed that.

Hogan: Anyway, before that I had been working to set up, or revitalize here, the San Francisco Housing Association, now part of what they call SPUR, planning and urban renewal; I worked in Washington for the government for a while on that. Then I worked for the American Association for Adult Education. We were putting on conferences around the country for all the adult education and related types, spending Carnegie money, to tell them that we were going to be in the war and they better prepare their communities for it.

Then in 1941 my brother died--he dropped dead, my older brother--and I had to return to California. At that time they were founding the USO [United Services Organization] here. I was head for the six western states, Hawaii, and Alaska. And I was here at the time of Pearl Harbor doing that. Then everything went to pieces, merchant-marinerwise, in the summer of 1942. And I was asked by one of the maritime commissioners, Captain Edward Macauley, Jr., an old navy man, to go to England to set up services for merchant marine survivors. His wife [Jean] and he were great friends of Helen. She was the daughter of old United States Senator [George T.] Oliver of Pennsylvania and was a very close friend of the Roosevelts.

Fry: Oh.

Hogan: Yes. You see, Macauley captained the two world trips of Wilson to Paris and later became maritime commissioner. He was an intimate of [Franklin] Roosevelt when Roosevelt was Assistant Secretary of the Navy. That's the basic relationship, but they were intimate friends. And, of course, Helen later became great friends of both FDR and Eleanor.

Fry: Through Macauley's wife?

Hogan: Possibly. Of course, everybody knew Eleanor.

Fry: Yes, and Mel was working with Eleanor Roosevelt, too.

Hogan: Yes, surely. Helen used to stay at the White House frequently. I always felt conspicuous when she'd pick me up in a White House car with the presidential seal on it.

Fry: This would have been when? When you were in Washington working for housing?

Hogan: Yes. You see, the housing interest of Helen fundamentally is connected with the housing for migrant workers. That was the beginning of her concern. And she's never lost it.

Fry: Now let me ask you some basic information. First we need the name of your father and your mother.

Hogan: Thomas Patrick Hogan. Elizabeth Monahan Hogan. My uncle was the mayor of San Jose when I was born.

Fry: Oh, is that right. What was his name?

Hogan: Thomas Monahan.

Fry: When you were in school were you always interested in philosophy, or did you have a lot of other interests?

Hogan: What else is there to be interested in?

Fry: [Laughs] I guess that answers the question.

Hogan: No, I was always an egg-head, book type. Yes.

Fry: I had you spotted as someone who had a multiplicity of interests.

Hogan: Well, I never was interested in athletics. I used to debate.

Fry: But humanities--

Hogan: Yes, always.

Fry: When you were at Cal, were you on the debating team?

Hogan: No, I never went out competitively for anything.

Fry: Oh. [Laughs]

Meiklejohn must have come here from his Wisconsin school.

Hogan: That's right. And he had been president of Amherst.

Fry: I think we ought to get something on that Wisconsin experimental school because what he did was a very significant movement in education at that period. It was cut off, as you say, with the war, and as I understand it never quite came back on the American scene.

Hogan: Well, I think it had a wide influence.

Fry: Yes, that's what I hear. Like the graduates?

Hogan: Not only that, but Meiklejohn was a very sought-after lecturer. He had been president of Amherst and tried to be experimental, and the board didn't like it and so they fired him, or in effect, he had to resign. The man who really engineered that was [Dwight W.] Morrow, the father of Mrs. [Charles] Lindbergh, Anne, and later ambassador to Mexico.



Fry: Was he on the board?

Hogan: Yes, of Amherst. Then Glenn Frank [president of the University of Wisconsin] invited Meiklejohn to come to Wisconsin and do the first year of college in a residential arrangement, men only, in which for the first year they studied intensively Greek civilization, especially in the highest period of it. Then for the second year they studied American civilization. The students did their other work necessary for whatever profession they wanted to go into. But this attracted tremendous attention. And it was abandoned chiefly for financial reasons, although it disturbed a lot of people because it was considered to be radical.

Fry: It was state-supported if I remember.

Hogan: Yes. So Meiklejohn came out here, or was out here for the adult education experiment. There was one individual who gave a big sum of money. The rest of the money came from small contributions and Carnegie grants. The idea of it was of adults to get together for intellectual interaction. Either some groups were selected--for instance International Ladies' Garment Workers, or Bakery Wagon Drivers' Union, or League of Women Voters types--or just members of the public.

They met weekly for two hours. They were discussions led by trained people based upon the reading of challenging books. And it was extremely interesting, but the war put the kibosh on that, of course. But the thinking behind it and the people who observed it and all of that had a very marked influence over time, and it's still referred to in education circles as one of the great advances.

Meiklejohn retired more or less permanently then and stayed out here. But he went East a great deal and was very close to [Robert] Hutchins, president of the University of Chicago. And then spent a couple of years at one of Hutchins' interests--St. John's College at Annapolis, a fascinating place where again they were using the techniques from Wisconsin and San Francisco. This resulted in what is called the Great Books setup.

Fry: The one hundred great books of the western world.

Hogan: That's it. And all that. Meiklejohn kept an interest in it, very much. But it started that whole movement, which then became another one called Great Issues, a thing that's still going on--an annual series of books for discussion based on readings.

Fry: Did you continue to be connected with any of this as it evolved into Great Books and Great Issues?

Hogan: I personally, no. Except that, yes, I visited St. John's and always see the Meiklejohns. His widow will be returning to Berkeley in a matter of a couple of days. The Meiklejohn Lecture, the annual lecture, has just been given at Brown, Meiklejohn's college, by Kingman Brewster, Jr., the president of Yale who's going to be the ambassador to Britain. And Helen Meiklejohn went east to it.

Fry: And Helen [Everett] Meiklejohn lives in Berkeley?

Hogan: Yes. She was an economist of distinction, too. She was his second wife.

Fry: Yes, I guess I understood that. They met at Amherst?

Hogan: No, they met at Brown. Her father was the head of the Philosophy Department at Brown. And he was a graduate of Brown--Meiklejohn was--but considerably older than Helen.

Fry: I want to pick up just one more thread here. There was a rather significant book on disarmament, world population, and feeding the world that came out of St. John's College right after World War II, written by the president of St. John's.

Hogan: Stringfellow Barr.

Fry: Did you know Stringfellow Barr?

Hogan: Sure, sure.

### The United Nations: A Focus for Creative Energies

#### The Challenges of Socio-Economic Development Abroad

Fry: Were you at all a part of this group of people at that time who were trying to lead a movement into an awareness of the need for feeding the world?

Hogan: Yes, but by that time the FAO had been formed--the Food and Agricultural Organization at the United Nations, you see.

Fry: Yes.

Hogan: And the leadership of it, in this country, came largely from Henry [A.] Wallace and Lord Boyd Orr of England. And the FAO got going and with great support from the American government and public. We had fed

Hogan: the world. We continued to have to feed the world after the war. And the advances in agriculture were tremendous. Further, the Marshall Plan had to put the American know-how in agriculture back into Europe so that Europe could begin to become self-supporting. And it all tied in with my own United Nations work then.

Fry: Yes, which I understand was on the Non-Governmental Organizations in the United Nations.

Hogan: Yes, that was part of it, but I was also heavily involved in the aid to the new countries and the backward countries, both. I did both, because we were very much eager to get the worldwide international organizations concerned with economic-agricultural-social development. For instance, the missionaries, the trade unions, the co-ops--all were important as adjuncts to all the United Nations' efforts and the efforts of the specialized agencies, like World Health Organization. You had to get the Quakers, and the Boy Scouts [laughs], and everybody you could organize to cooperate within these big worldwide moves.

Fry: And that was your job?

Hogan: Well, in the early days we did everything, but I chiefly was concerned with Non-Governmental Organizations--the ones in consultative status, as it's called.

Fry: The consultative status was yours or was the Non-Governmental Organizations?

Hogan: That's the same thing. It's called the Non-Governmental Organizations [NGOs] in Consultative Status. They have status at the United Nations --they're granted it--to work in the economic and social fields.

Fry: And what was your exact position with them?

Hogan: Well, I was chief of the section on NGOs. I was also Secretary of the Technical Assistance Committee. That was a committee of governments that made the policy governing the aid to developing countries.

Fry: And how long were you in that?

Hogan: Over twenty-one years. I retired just ten years ago.

Fry: I see a number of places then where your life could have--

Hogan: Collided with Helen's.

Fry: Yes, collided with Helen's. But before we go on into that, I wish you could tell me more about the people who formed a sort of nucleus of support in the United States for this work that you were doing and then groups that were opposing it through this whole twenty-one year period.



Hogan: Well, that's easy, but it's an awfully broad subject. The Catholics were always ambiguous about this. Some of them--Monsignor O'Grady, a Jesuit--were very strong for the U.N. and trying to tie in the missionaries with the children's fund, for instance--with the whole world nutrition problem. The Protestants nationally--their leadership, like John Foster Dulles and Fred Nolde [O. Frederick Nolde], and the National Council of Churches--were very helpful to the U.N.

Now the Bible Belters weren't. They thought we were all Communists. And Cardinal Francis Spellman was very resistant. He was a [Joe] McCarthyite, of course, and an isolationist. He was vigorously for the war in Vietnam, and also in Korea, but especially in Vietnam. Many of the clergy in this country felt that anti-Communism was a complete political philosophy and policy, and that the United Nations was, too --due to McCarthy and, oh, the [Alger] Hiss furor and all of that. You see, the American Legion didn't join the World Veterans Federation. It was very isolationist and gave rousing cheers to McCarthy every year at their annual convention.

Now the United States Chamber of Commerce was very much interested in the International Chamber of Commerce's work with the United Nations. The trade unions were very much for the U.N. Very commonly you had somebody like George Meany, and both of the Reuthers were, for instance, among the public members of the U.N. delegation to the Assembly. They were concerned, in the Marshall Plan and subsequently, to develop strong Western European trade unions that were non-communist. They were afraid of communist takeovers in Italy, Germany, France, and the Low Countries, and put a great deal of effort and money into subsidizing and aiding. You see, Hitler had wrecked, the war had wrecked the socialist and trade union movements, and a great deal of effort went into rehabilitating them.

What the U.N. needed was the big agricultural co-op people to teach cooperative use of farm machinery--all that kind of thing. Farmers came along beautifully. As a matter of fact, they supported the farm part of all this so beautifully that they didn't want it under the U.N., they wanted it quite separate. They wanted to have FAO be totally independent of the U.N. The farm Senators were ready to put all the money that we could--all that they needed--to help feed the world and show them the methods of increasing production.

You see, the continent of Europe was practically devoid of blood stock--of hens, pigs, cattle. They'd all been eaten. The Nazis ate them all. And great successful efforts were made by American private organizations, such as the Mennonites, to send blood stock and send people with them, to rebuild the Danish bacon and ham factories, and cheese cultures, and so forth. Because Denmark and Norway were starving, so was Holland--very rich agricultural countries, you see. And France.

Fry: Why did the farmers want FAO to be independent?

Hogan: Have you ever been in the Middle West?

Fry: Yes.

Hogan: Well, the people there--there's the answer.

Fry: Oh. Are you referring to the kind of isolationist point of view?

Hogan: Yes, the Middle Westerners are very generous, but they don't think much of foreigners.

Fry: But this would continue to be an international organization. It's just that it would not be in the United Nations.

Hogan: Well, you see, the same argument was made by a group here. Some of the teachers here wanted to support UNESCO as a separate organization. And many of the doctors and nurses felt we should have the World Health Organization separate. The whole plea of the United Nations--and this is something Roosevelt had to fight and Harry Truman had to fight--was the desire of people to compartmentalize all of these and not have the United Nations as the coordinating, overall body establishing identical policies for all of them on matters of administration, and matters of finance, and so forth.

And it would be the same way that farmers would fight for farm appropriations for the Department of Agriculture and the teachers for HEW [Health, Education, and Welfare]. The same thing happens domestically.

Fry: So that they'll have more power in the policies if the organization is more autonomous.

Hogan: That's right--at the pork barrel, yes.

Fry: Okay. I'd like to know your view of how this changed after we were psychologically in the McCarthy period.

Hogan: We still are, we still are--don't kid yourself.

Fry: And we still are, I agree, to some extent, but not as intensively as we were in the fifties.

Hogan: Not as strong, not as intensely--no. But Nixon was as much of a McCarthyite as anyone else. Remember, it's true he moved for the recognition of Red China, but for twenty-five years he had been as great a stumbling block to it as anyone else.



Fry: Now it doesn't seem we have as much public fear of the United Nations now as we had in the fifties.

Hogan: Of course not.

Fry: Do you think that's true?

Hogan: Nixon had to resign! McCarthy died a drunkard's death--repudiated. You know, the American Legion opposed the U.N. And remember, John Foster Dulles talked internationalism, but he was a very, very narrow-minded one.

Fry: Maybe you could describe the way you functioned and what your major jobs were in this position with the United Nations so I can get some idea, because I have a feeling that these pressure groups in the United States might not have really been one of your major concerns.

Hogan: It was not only that, but the two jobs went together. I'll tell you why. The big non-governmental organizations really do a great deal of governing. Take the World Nursing Association. Yes, it's in consultative status, naturally, to the U.N. through the World Health Organization. Now who would you go to to establish nursing training in Indonesia or Bolivia? To the World Nursing Association. Most of the big organizations--the technical ones--are like that; the World Medical Association, are concerned with spreading medical education in the backward places. They aren't concerned with the London School of Tropical Medicine--no. They're concerned with developing African medical schools and nursing schools and nutrition. In other words, the U.N. development programs in the social and economic spheres depend upon the world organizations in their respective fields.

Fry: Yes. For instance, I guess we [Regional Oral History Office] have done some work in trying to document the establishment of FAO, particularly in forestry because that's very strong with the Californians. And in establishing the FAO the American Society of Foresters had a kind of network of people to work to produce the independent FAO.

Hogan: Sure. Well, you'll find the same thing in pigs. [Laughter] Yes. Surely.

Fry: You mean the National Pig Growers Association? [Laughs]

Hogan: The world one. They want other people to grow good pigs, and get blue ribbons for their pigs. [Members of the FAO teach people to] grow more eggs than anyone else in the world.

Fry: Eggs?



- Hogan: Eggs. Shell eggs. Their hens lay more eggs than anybody else's. And they'll teach anybody, and the U.N. would send out experts. In Haiti the blood stock was so depleted that there were little pigeon eggs the hens laid. We had to change the entire blood stock of Haitian hens, and teach them to keep records and to run hatcheries. The object was to increase the protein diet of Haiti. Just that simple. And hens are one of the best ways because you can eat the hen or--
- Fry: You can eat the egg.
- Hogan: Yes. That's a very simple case, but it's been done. They're still starving.
- Fry: Even though they have bigger eggs. What about substitute foods and things like this? Did you work with these questions?
- Hogan: I'm not a specialist. I was dealing with policy and politicians and ministries of say, agriculture or whatever, or health.
- Fry: What countries did you find the most difficult to deal with?
- Hogan: All of them. [Laughs] No, in this sense, the Danes. Now they have redone themselves, they're helping other people. You can go to Denmark and study anything. The Danes will put you up. No, the more backward--illiteracy is something that's just a fact.
- Fry: And you're saying that the more backward the country the more difficult it was?
- Hogan: Of course.
- Fry: Because you had this problem of communication there. Education.
- Hogan: Well, for instance, to get women involved--I'll tell you a good story. Jordan--parts of it--are very bleak. The people, some of them, are nomadic. And the government agreed for WHO to set up a maternity and child welfare clinic. They were losing their population. It was dying off, and infant mortality was shocking. So the government agreed to put up some of the money and the U.N. the rest, to put a clinic out where the nomads came and could come to easily, and they put three trained nurses out there who were Arabic speaking. And they sat there for months, and nothing happened.
- Fry: Nobody came?

Hogan: Men didn't want their wives being--none of that. So one night the three girls were there and they heard a hell of a hullabulloo. And there were a lot of men outside and they didn't know quite what. They found out that one of the men had a valuable cow at his little oasis or whatever, and they wanted the girls to come because the cow was in labor and not delivering. And so they went out. They used their heads and their arms. They saved the cow and the calf, which were very valuable. Well, the men decided that if the nurses could do that for the cow they could do it for their wives [laughs], who were much less valuable, and the thing then became successful.

Well, what is that? What do you want to call that? [Laughter] What's your problem? Your problem is you're up against a stone wall, even though the government says, "Of course." Ah yes, but the people!

Fry: The customs and what they'll accept as new practices is a problem, I understand, from talking to public health people.

Hogan: The King of Jordan is a graduate of Sandhurst, yes.

#### Some Commentaries on U.S. Secretaries of State

Fry: Okay. What about the various secretaries of state in the United States that you've had to deal with or with their immediate office?

Hogan: John Foster Dulles was so for the United Nations and did a lot in San Francisco and all that. And a great deal of his reputation was because he was the Republican, Mr. Republican under Truman. Then when he became secretary of state he forgot completely about bipartisanship. And I think he was a ghastly failure--a bag of wind. And sanctimonious.

Fry: And the Korean War came in there.

Hogan: The Korean War, yes, the Korean War and especially the support of Syngman Rhee--the unquestioned support of Syngman Rhee. He was as bad as [Nguyen Van] Thieu.

Fry: Did you have anything to do with Korea before the Korean War--any work there?

Hogan: There wasn't any.

Fry: Was there much done in Southeast Asia via these United Nations organizations?

Hogan: A great deal. And the preliminary work, the designing and even the political cooperation of Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam for the utilization of the water of the Mekong River is all ready. And when those people weren't speaking to one another, their governments' representatives would meet on the overall planning. In other words, the U.N. has the plans, and is going ahead now again, for the Mekong River comparable to the Tennessee Valley, yes. Some of the richest part of the world if it's controlled. It's a beautiful river.

Fry: So that simply went on, apparently.

Hogan: Well, look here. You remember that the United Nations has stamped out, practically, smallpox?

Fry: Yes.

Hogan: Yes. And it's gone a long way with--what's that thing where you're shaking with fever?

Fry: Malaria?

Hogan: Malaria, yes. Diphtheria can be obliterated. We, damn fools, still don't vaccinate our children against measles, so there's an epidemic on. Sure. No, a great deal has been done in these fields, and nutritionally. If you can get a school to get the children to change their food habits at school lunches, they'll find out that milk is good for growing children as well as infants.

Fry: Well, back to the other secretaries of state.

Hogan: Oh, Dean Rusk had been at the U.N. as a young man. I knew him here first, of course, when he was teaching at Mills College before the war. And then he was in the U.S. delegation as a State Department member to the Paris General Assembly of '48 and of '50. And then was an obvious candidate. Of course personally I would have preferred Adlai Stevenson. In fact, I first met Adlai at the U.N. Helen took him and me to lunch, because he was in the delegation when she was in it in '46.

Fry: Oh, in '46. Yes. And you've been his supporter ever since?

Hogan: Absolutely. In fact, I was in Geneva and heard the last speech he ever gave.

Fry: Oh, really?

Hogan: Yes.



Fry: Just before he died.

Hogan: Yes.

Fry: Did you work with him?

Hogan: No. I was an employee of the United Nations, not of the United States.

Fry: I see.

Hogan: That is, after the U.N. was formed. During the war--yes, the United States. After--the U.N.

Fry: Do you have any ideas on why Stevenson didn't get secretary of state?

Hogan: Ask [Lyndon B.] Johnson.

Fry: I thought maybe you were in on some of the grapevine.

Hogan: Well, there were lots of reasons given. I was disappointed. Dean Rusk went right along on the whole Cold War thing. Right the same way as Dulles had. There was no shift whatever.

#### The Impact of the Cold War on United Nations Positions

Fry: What did you think about the whole Cold War thing?

Hogan: I think the Cold War was totally unnecessary. I think it was paranoia. The Russians were so weak they couldn't have done a thing. There's the book finally out now on the China Lobby.

Fry: [Senator William] Knowland?

Hogan: Oh, Billy Knowland. He was a horror! Yes, and his father, too. Yes, the four of them. And Congressman [Walter H.] Judd, and Mr. Kohlberg, and Cardinal Spellman. Read the first--

Fry: This is Ross Y. Koen, The China Lobby in American Politics.

Hogan: It's just out.

Fry: Harper & Row. [Looking through book]

Hogan: You don't have to read the front part of this. Just read the first paragraph.

Fry: Oh, I didn't know that. [Reads] "Mr. Koen's book was first printed in 1960, but its distribution was enjoined owing to pressures from the China Lobby."

Hogan: Henry Luce.

Fry: "Over four thousand copies were destroyed by the publisher. Less than eight hundred circulated. Many of these were stolen from libraries by right-wing groups which literally replaced them with The Red China Lobby, which was a Forrest Davis and Robert A. Hunter book, New York Fleet Publishing Company, 1963. Others were placed under lock and key in rare book rooms in university libraries throughout the country." So now they're reprinting it.

Well, I just wonder how much this whole struggle that was going on diplomatically and with such pressure groups as this at that time affected your job and if it touched you at all.

Hogan: If it touched me? Of course it touched me! It touched all American citizens who were employees of any intergovernmental organization. We were FBied until we were blue in the face. Yes.

Fry: You were constantly on the defense about being accused--?

Hogan: And Helen went to my trial, yes, and testified for me, that I wasn't dangerous.

Fry: Oh. When were you brought up on the carpet and by whom?

Hogan: Well, the Loyalty Board it was called.

Fry: Oh, the U.S. Loyalty Board.

Hogan: Yes.

Fry: And was that in the early fifties or later?

Hogan: I don't remember exactly. Yes, it must have been.

Fry: And that was a personnel-type board, wasn't it.

Hogan: Well, you see, they had the FBI files. And the FBI sent people around to interview your garbageman.

Fry: And neighbors.

Hogan: And neighbors and so forth. You see, the thing is this: anyone who is alert during the period from 1932 through the war, knew necessarily the people who were attacked by the China Lobby or the American

Hogan: Legion or J. Edgar Hoover. Yes. One met in San Francisco people like Edgar Snow and [Owen] Lattimore and knew the people at the Institute of Pacific Relations.

[end tape 1, side A; begin tape 1, side B]

Hogan: You see, the kind of people who followed Nixon--I like to call them Legionnaire types--were so suspicious of the United Nations. For instance, Henry Ford II was a member of the public delegation to the Assembly once. He and the family were strongly pro-U.N. and they wanted to help the World Federation of United Nations Associations, but the Ford Foundation didn't dare give the money because the Ford dealers threatened to expose the Ford Foundation as communist, and there was enough of that said. So the Ford family, as individuals, gave money to the World Federation of United Nations Associations.

But Detroit is the kind of place where they're afraid of everything. Still are.

Fry: Along with the problem of a continuous investigation by the FBI, I wonder, too, if you kept running into the presence of the CIA as you worked in these countries?

Hogan: Of course! You go into any embassy, if you know some people there, or in the town or in the capital or wherever it is, they know who are the spooks [CIA] and who aren't. And also the CIA was giving great subsidies to American and international organizations to place them in positions where they could function with the CIA money and take over the organization and resist any possibility of communist influence.

Fry: So this would cut down a great deal on your freedom to do what you wanted to do--

Hogan: Not mine ever, not mine ever, no.

Fry: How did you keep it from doing that?

Hogan: Oh, they watched me. They knew I didn't do anything naughty. [Laughs]

Fry: Oh, I see. And did you take some of the CIA money for--

Hogan: I never took a nickel from anybody. Many organizations, national and international, took CIA money, yes, and expenses to send their members, yes.

Fry: --for whatever it was you were trying to set up is what I meant. Were you able to use CIA funds without being bothered by restraints that were put on it?



- Hogan: I never used anybody's funds. The United Nations never used anybody's funds. The AF of L [American Federation of Labor] used a great deal through the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, used a great deal of CIA money. But if you're politically hep you can tell pretty quickly.
- Fry: Well, that's what I meant, like the World Organization of Nursing, or whatever the correct name was, would funnel their money so you could set up your hospitals and all of this.
- Hogan: Of course! They were more interested in control of the organization and keeping Communists out than they were in hospitals. But they were especially eager about trade unions. Now look, you can tell a Communist just as fast. In the early days no Communist was at a meeting, ever--that is a Soviet Union Communist or Eastern Communist --without his own CIA man watching him. [Laughter] Oh, yes. You could tell who they were. Which was which.
- Fry: He always had a shadow.
- Hogan: They didn't approve then of fraternization and so forth. The whole period, as I will be saying to myself again tonight, was marked by money that went into the China Lobby--Henry Luce, for instance, yes. And shakedown of the San Francisco Chinese to support Chiang Kai-shek. Sure. It's changed now.
- Fry: Some of these big wealthy Chinese families in San Francisco.
- Hogan: They were taxed. But the CIA gave enough money to Chiang Kai-shek. Honey, what do you think happened to all the money that went into Vietnam? Well, an awful lot of them are living very well in exile. A lot are not. A lot backed the wrong horse and forgot to send enough money to Switzerland.
- Fry: Yes, I guess I was reading an article the other day on how the former president of South Korea is now living rather high on the hog in Southern California.
- Hogan: Syngman Rhee lived there a long time, too. He almost started War III. He was ready to go with or without old [Douglas] MacArthur, north over the line. John Foster Dulles sent a presidential plane and got Fred Nolde of the World Council of Churches to fly to Korea to tell Rhee, who was a great Bible-pounding Lutheran, you know, that if he did start War III and send troops over the Yalu that the World Council of Churches would not support him.
- Fry: Was that effective? I don't remember that.
- Hogan: Yes.

Fry: He responded to the World Council of Churches?

Hogan: Well, that's a pretty powerful body.

Fry: What do you think of the policies and their proportion of projects of the United Nations Non-Governmental Organizations during the period up to our Vietnam War? Do you think that more could have been done?

Hogan: Well, let me ask you this: Could anyone have saved Chiang Kai-shek? No. What we did to save Chiang Kai-shek he saved for himself, hoping to become the dictator of the whole of China and to be able to kill off the Communists. He failed completely. Our generals told a series of presidents that they could drive the Communists out of Indochina. They were dead wrong, and I mean dead. They spent \$150 billion and 55,000 were killed and they were completely wrong.

The mistake, I think, of [Lyndon] Joynson, whom I knew well--of course he was a close friend of Helen's as you know well--and [Richard] Nixon was they believed the generals. They were dead wrong. And so we did an unconditional withdrawal. And today it says we're going to recognize South Vietnam--on the radio this morning.

Fry: Yes. Back when France was the proprietor of Vietnam, did you have projects going on?

Hogan: France never really reestablished a proper government for any of Indochina.

Fry: You had no framework to work with?

Hogan: Right. The Vietnamese considered the U.S. as stooges of the French originally. And they didn't want a French government. They wanted their own government. Naturally.

Fry: Did you see the Ho Chi Minh movement there as an internal thing?

Hogan: Well, of course that's what it was. The idea that Moscow was running Peking is just typical of the absurd paranoia of people like Nixon and John Foster Dulles.

Fry: What about the idea of Peking running Ho Chi Minh?

Hogan: It didn't. Just because we can run Thieu and [Fulgencio] Batista doesn't mean that the reverse is true, you see.

Fry: Did you at any time get caught in the forces of either the people who we thought were Communists, on one hand, and the other side in these countries?

Hogan: Well, one just keeps out of that.

Fry: You mean it really didn't touch you?

Hogan: Yes, but you stay out of that kind of thing. You let force make the government make the decision--the local government. Don't accept any other advice or agreement. Everything must be agreed to in writing, and you do that with the constituted government, whatever it is.

Fry: You're speaking of such things as elections.

Hogan: The U.N. only carries out elections when it decides to, and largely those have been over boundary lines.

Fry: To create a territory.

Hogan: Yes.

#### Before the United Nations

#### Head of the Western Division of United Services Organization

Fry: I wanted you to tell us a little bit about your USO experience and how you happened to get into that.

Hogan: My brother dropped dead—he was fifty.

Fry: And he was here in Oakland?

Hogan: Oakland, yes, running the Hogan Lumber Company. And I was with the American Association for Adult Education. I heard about this and I had to come to California. The last thing I want to do is run a lumber business. [Laughter] They were forming the USO, and the head of the adult education association spoke to the head of the YMCA. They needed somebody who knew the West Coast and so I found myself on a plane--a few days in Washington to get the line--then out here as head of the USO. And Helen was marvelous, very helpful--she and a lot of her friends down there.

Fry: How did she help?

Hogan: For instance, getting talent. One of the persons who worked very closely with her for all this was Gladys [Lloyd Cassell] Robinson, Edward Robinson's wife.



Fry: Edward G. Robinson's wife. They were rather good friends with the Robinsons, weren't they?

Hogan: Very good friends. And the Oscar Homolkas.

Fry: Was this an organizational job in which you set up USOs around the country? Or what did you do?

Hogan: In the West, six states.

Fry: Did you have fund raising to do?

Hogan: And the government was building things. I had nothing to do with fund raising. I sat as the chairman of the representatives of the six organizations which were doing the operating, who ran facilities.

Fry: Six?

Hogan: The YMCA, the YWCA, the Catholic Conference, the Jewish Welfare Board, the Traveler's Aid--and what else? Well, there were six of them. Salvation Army, yes.

Fry: Well, that looks like it would be a nightmare of keeping all those people behind you.

Hogan: You were out! You're absolutely right.

Fry: How did you manage to keep it from just falling apart instantly?

Hogan: I don't know. I couldn't tell you.

Fry: I mean we didn't have a war on to hold people together at the beginning.

Hogan: Oh, they knew the war was coming, and when the war came there was such a need that anything you could do was good.

Fry: So you had six bosses.

Hogan: Well, the USO had its own board, and things.

Fry: Was the board also made up of representatives of these organizations?

Hogan: Not entirely, no.

Fry: Moneybags?

Hogan: Yes, and prominent citizens.

- Fry: Who were the people in the West who were behind it with their money? Do you know?
- Hogan: The movie industry. The kind of people that go for community chests and that kind of thing. Would you like a cup of coffee or a beer or something like that?
- Fry: A cup of coffee would be marvelous. [Coffee break; tape off]

### The Challenges of San Francisco's Housing Problems

- Fry: Well, the thing that interested me was you said there was redevelopment in housing. But it was before World War II?
- Hogan: Oh, definitely. The story goes this way: San Francisco was one of the worst planned cities in the world.
- Fry: [Laughs] I agree.
- Hogan: They put on top of rolling hills and steep hills a checkerboard grid pattern. After the fire they had a chance to redo the city and an architect named Burnham came up with a great plan of how he would have circular routes up Russian Hill and Telegraph Hill and Nob Hill and redo the city properly in the then-fashionable theories. But the Burnham Plan became hopelessly controversial. Two great women, Elizabeth Ashe and Alice Griffith, ran the Telegraph Hill settlement house--the original settlement house here. They were two grandes dames and very wise and very public-spirited and totally respected. And they formed the San Francisco Housing Association. They were somewhat worried by the kind of slapstick housing that was being built after the San Francisco earthquake and fire at fancy prices that was worthless and equally dangerous for fire. They tried very hard to get the reorganization of the whole map of the city. And failed, of course.
- Fry: They got behind the Burnham Plan?
- Hogan: Yes. And the Housing and Planning Association didn't do much. It was totally inactive finally. Then, in the New Deal, when we began to get a public housing project here, and the Meiklejohn School gave a course--I gave a course--on housing and planning. And we revived the San Francisco Housing and Planning Association. We even formed a state one, which became SPUR, you see, a very going concern.
- Fry: Does SPUR go all the way back to this time?

Hogan: Yes! Well, it didn't have that name then. The name SPUR is fairly recent. It became regional even and is a fine organization, but it was the revivication of the Housing and Planning Association. One of the things we did was a survey on housing in Chinatown. You know, a little study. The women themselves did it. And it led to the building of the first housing project in Chinatown here.

Now the reason for that is rather amusing. Jean Macauley, the daughter of Senator Oliver, sent a copy of it to Eleanor [Roosevelt]. And Eleanor devoted one day of her column "My Day" to the horrible housing in Chinatown. And that is what stirred the locals, the public, to get the housing project for the Chinese. Now there have been two or three more built in Chinatown as urban renewal.

Fry: Where is the original project? Do you know?

Hogan: Well, there are three now, I think, in Chinatown, built by the government. There's one on Broadway; it isn't that one. It's another one--the first. But this broke the idea that Chinatown was a charming area. It also began to break the restriction on living outside the proper boundary. You see, there are a lot of Chinese around here, and a lot of Chinese own property, but they used to be able to not come beyond, say, Taylor Street. There was a fixed line, oh, and the real estate interests wouldn't let the Chinese come over. It was like the Mason-Dixon Line. [Laughs] And red lining was practiced, and so forth. And of course the Italians didn't want them on Telegraph Hill. They were very restricted. That's broken down very much now. The Chinese go and live anywhere--within limits.

Fry: Would we have a copy of that Chinatown report, do you think, at the university library?

Hogan: No, you don't. That is, I would be very much surprised. I know where one exists. Gigi [Georgiana Gerlinger] Stevens has one.

Fry: Do you think she would donate it?

Hogan: Ask her. Do you know her?

Fry: No.

Hogan: You don't? Good heavens, you don't know anybody if you don't know Gigi.

Fry: [laughs] I'm a fringe member of society.

Hogan: Oh, well, wait a minute. If you've interviewed Earl Warren you'll know her sister, Jean, now Mrs. Charles B. Kuhn. She was the widow of [Robert C.] Bob Kirkwood, who was state controller. And Bob



Hogan: Kirkwood, Jr., has been president of SPUR, and his brother John is on the board of BART [Bay Area Rapid Transit]. They're a lovely family. They're all Berkeleyites. As a matter of fact, Jean, Bob Kirkwood's mother, was in the first class I taught at Berkeley. And Gigi Stevens was in my class of '26 at Berkeley. She just lives two blocks away from me now. If you want to write her, you may. Mrs. Harley [C.] Stevens. During World War II she was in the OSS. Her husband was a Standard Oil attorney and was the attorney for Ralph [K.] Davies. Ralph Davies, who gave away millions and millions and millions. Ralph was in a class of mine at Meiklejohn School.

Fry: I'll bet if we just went down the list of people who were a part of the Meiklejohn School we would find a lot of community movers and shakers.

Hogan: One of the students I'm surprised you haven't got, if you haven't, is Dorothy Erskine, who has been completely committed to San Francisco's planning problems.

Fry: Oh, we've been trying to tape her for years, and now at last we are. I've met her on several occasions.

Hogan: Well, you can't help but meet Dorothy. She's everywhere.

Fry: She was an especially good friend of Sara Bard Field Wood.

Hogan: Very close, yes.

Sara's daughter, Katherine Caldwell, is a great friend of hers, too.

Fry: Was Mrs. Erskine in this early effort of yours?

Hogan: She was in the class on Chinatown, yes. And went right on; she'll never lie down. She's just over eighty now. She'll cooperate with anything good. But she spends a lot of time out of town; she can't stand fog and that kind of thing. But Dorothy is so cooperative generally. She always has projects she's working on.

Fry: Well, at any rate, then you had this association of housing and planning, and what was your role when all this was happening?

Hogan: I was the secretary of it, and we had a board, and we were especially active. People were fighting very hard to keep housing projects out of their neighborhoods: the old idea that "they'll move in people that keep the coal in the bathtub." And we had to fight for it--we had to fight the general Republican opposition to any kind of such program. Until we got the act that Nathan Straus wrote.\*

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\*Sponsored by Senator Robert Wagner (Democrat, New York) and passed in 1937 as the United States Housing Act.

Fry: The housing act.

Hogan: Yes. He became the administrator of the United States Housing Authority in Washington; he was an old personal friend of both of the Roosevelts from childhood. Nathan Straus is the family of the Strauses that owns Macy's, and he ran Abraham and Straus, the great Brooklyn store. Well he was a devout Democrat and great supporter of FDR.

## Mobilization and World War II

Fry: Now did you become governmental at this point?

Hogan: Yes, I went and was a consultant in Washington at a point after some of this, for the housing authority. I was there when the American Association for Adult Education got its big grant to hold conferences of community leadership organizations in a dozen centers, to tell them that we were getting into the war and that it would make a tremendous difference to the community. Some would lose population; others would have big camps built, things had to be done and communities should get organizing now.

Because we had a chain of adult education councils, they became very convenient nuclei for the organized public that would have to deal with the problems of great shifts of population. Places like Tacoma had Fort Lewis, you see, there. Overnight it got a million men in it. San Diego was absolutely bursting. Vallejo and San Francisco servicemen all had their last few nights here.

Fry: Yes, so that these adult education groups were used as a way of trying to educate the public in advance?

Hogan: Trying to tell them: "Your community has to ask itself, and your organizations, what will be the effect of war on your community."

Fry: So you had meetings with leaders of various organizations?

Hogan: We held big regional conferences. This was with Carnegie money for the American Association for Adult Education. You probably don't know this, but you know that Andy Carnegie said that he'd build a library for anybody that would run it.

Fry: Yes.

- Hogan: At the same time he formed and endowed--and the Carnegie Corporation continued to give--great monies to the American Library Association. It was a totally subsidized Carnegie baby. Equally, because of the interrelationship of the two, the American Association for Adult Education was a Carnegie subsidiary.
- Fry: Oh. So you didn't have many money problems?
- Hogan: No.
- Fry: Was this before Pearl Harbor?
- Hogan: Indeed.
- Fry: You said earlier that you knew the war was coming. How did you know we were going to get in the war?
- Hogan: I was awake. Sooner or later. Well, you know Roosevelt wanted to get us in much earlier, don't you? And so he told the Japanese where to hit.
- Fry: Oh, now come on! [Laughs] Seriously--
- Hogan: That's why he kept the fleet in Hawaii--sitting ducks, sitting ducks. No, in the era of [Senator Joseph] McCarthy--people believed that, sincerely. It was the era when the Chicago Tribune printed the fact that we had the Japanese code. That old stinker McCormick--a great patriot. Yeaaaaa! Don't get me angry. Don't get me angry. I bite.
- Fry: Oh, McCormick, the Tribune publisher?
- Hogan: Yes. Shall I turn on the oven for lunch?
- Fry: Oh, okay.
- Hogan: What time is it? I can't see around the--
- Fry: It is six minutes till one.
- Hogan: All right. It will take about fifteen minutes.
- Fry: Oh, fine. Just one second. In other words, the American Association for Adult Education was willing to go on this assumption that war was inevitable?
- Hogan: And Carnegie gave them the additional money to go out and hold the conference and mobilize the adult education councils, which would always include the YMCA, the YWCA, the library people, the schools, the extension divisions of the university, the farm people.



Fry: The Farm Bureau?

Hogan: Yes. Well, all that type of group—like the League of Women Voters. If you got those people together you could get a community to do something. Now remember that Mr. [Charles] Lindbergh was walking the other side of the street, but we had to mobilize opinion the other way.

Fry: And this was with our mobilization, I guess, that came before the war.

Hogan: Yes.

Fry: We did have a national mobilization program.

Hogan: It was the time when the draft was saved by one vote.

Fry: Yes, that's why I was asking you. Because there was not unanimity at all in saying that war was coming at that point.

Hogan: Oh, no, no, no. The Irish were opposed to war coming—very much—because we'd have to fight on England's side. Didn't you ever hear in World War I of the Easter Rebellion?

Fry: Yes, but this was World War II, and I wasn't aware of it then.

Hogan: The lights never went out in Dublin. The bombers could take a bead from there. Yes, dear! Oh, yes. I've been around when they dropped them, too—three years.

Fry: During the war?

Hogan: Yes, I was bombed.

Fry: What were you doing in England?

Hogan: The problem was we were losing the war by the submarines. We had to establish facilities—in England first, of course, and in Reykjavik—for merchant seamen, for survivors, for crew replacements, for everything. And so they put me on a plane and shot me over.

Fry: Who put you on a plane?

Hogan: The War Shipping Administration. They said I knew England, and of course I knew Commissioner McCauley. So they sent me over there and said "proceed," under Lend Lease arrangements. The head of Lend Lease then in England was [W. Averell] Harriman. And [John G.] Winant, who was the ambassador, was the ex-head of the International Labor Office. He had been three times governor of New Hampshire. And they knew all the problems—both of them did. So we set to work, and we had to take

Hogan: over hotels, and make arrangements with the British medical people and our own army and navy medical people. And all in-jail, out-of-jail, repatriations, deaths, black-outs, drownings, collisions, invasions--everything. And then we had to move onto the continent as soon as they got in there.

Fry: So you went on through D-Day?

Hogan: Yes, ma'am. And V-E Day. I was in Paris on V-E Day.

Fry: Wow, what a place to be for V-E Day.

Hogan: It was a fantastic experience.

Fry: What was it like?

Hogan: The lights went on and millions of people walked to the Champs Elysées--there was no other way. There weren't any buses then, or anything like that. Millions! Fantastic.

Fry: Was there dancing?

Hogan: Everything. [Laughter]

Fry: The whole gamut of human behavior, you mean?

Hogan: Yes. [Tape off; lunch break]

Fry: I think we should have one good war story from your experiences in England.

Hogan: Oh, my experiences? Oh, no, no, no. I'd go on forever. It's an entirely different world. I'm not geared to it at all. I mean I'd have to think of what I'd--

Fry: All right. If it was an entirely different world--

Hogan: Entirely.

Where Helen Gahagan Douglas Fits In

At the United Nations

Fry: Did your war experiences have anything at all to do with what you did later?

Hogan: Ah, yes--when the war was over and I was returning, I went to say goodbye to Ambassador Winant, and he said to me, "I think I'll be getting out of here soon, too." He said, "I've been here a long time," and so forth. "I don't know what I'll be doing next, but keep in touch, because I'd like to have you on my team whatever I do next."

Well, at the time my wife and I were living with Helen [Gahagan Douglas] in Washington. We were writing for her and working with Evie [Chavoor] in the office.

Fry: This was when you first returned?

Hogan: Yes. My wife joined me there, and we lived with Helen from the beginning of the year, at least I did, and with the McCauleys--he was still commissioner. And then Betty came East and we lived with Helen in her house on Bradley Road, and then in another one that she took, and wrote speeches for her. I worked very hard on the British loan--the \$350 million loan to Britain--among congressmen and with Helen's contacts, and was getting the information that came in to them from constituents. We were getting the line on public attitude, and then we worked through that to the State Department and on to the usual thing. And Helen was also very heavily involved in the question of the peaceful use of atomic energy. The military wanted the whole control of it, and she and Brien [James O'Brien] McMahon, Senator from Connecticut who died shortly after this--fairly young--were insisting upon civilian control and an atomic energy agency under civilian jurisdiction.

Anyway, then I read that Winant was to be the first American member of the Economic and Social Council of the U.N. So Helen phoned him and said that I would be available if he needed me, and he said, "Send him right up to New York." So I went into the U.N. from London, really. He had been head of the International Labor Organization, which was in Geneva, and which became a specialized agency of the U.N. It was formed at Versailles--the constitution of the International Labor Organization is an appendix to the League charter.

Fry: What was your very first job at the United Nations?



Hogan: Actually the U.N. was still in a highly preparatory stage. At that time anybody did anything. You had to pitch in where you were needed. You were sort of shifted around to get the thing off the ground. I went there August '46 and the Assembly started in September. Helen was a member of that delegation. I was actually head of the section on freedom of information. The U.N. then was planning on a big program in it and they did have a big program, but it's all collapsed and failed, of course. And the human rights thing was it.

You see that's where I came into Eleanor Roosevelt's life. I had met her out here, but then I was with her her whole subsequent lifetime at the U.N., which was a long one, and after. Because when she was no longer the American member of the Commission on Human Rights, she kept very active in the American Association of the United Nations and in the World Association of the United Nations. She even came to the only Congress of the World Federation behind the Curtain in Warsaw, in Poland.

Fry: When?

Hogan: It would have been during Ike's [Dwight D. Eisenhower] time, I should imagine.

Fry: This Freedom of Information job was under the Human Rights Commission, is that right?

Hogan: Yes. We held a tremendous month-long U.N. conference, worldwide, in Geneva in '48. This is where we began to see the total cleavage between the East and the West.

Fry: Yes, that was the big difference between the U.S.A. and Communists behind the Iron Curtain.

[end tape 1, side B; begin tape 2, side A]

Hogan: A good example of the totalitarian versus the democratic governments.

Fry: We'll continue that on the Human Rights Commission later.

Hogan: Before we do, there's something I've been thinking about.

Richard Nixon

Hogan: Number one, there's no point in documenting Nixon and Helen without doing Nixon and Jerry Voorhis. In other words, the dirtiness of the campaign by which Jerry got out of Congress in 1946 and by which Nixon

Hogan: got into the Senate in 1950 are identical. There was a man no more a Communist than that cat Honore, [pointing to a painting by his son] who was attacked, attacked, attacked under the same tactics. In other words, when Nixon ran against Voorhis, he had a trial run on Helen. Now, when I say, "he did," that means the agribusiness people and the offshore oil people. I don't need to tell you about them. Because those two were the issues--the 160-acre limitation and the offshore oil.

Fry: Did you see those as the publicly-interested issues, too?--

Hogan: Oh, yes.

Fry: --that the general public was interested in?

Hogan: It was oil that provided the money, plus, I suppose, the California Packing Corporation and so forth. But there is a point in here which should be told. I've only told this to one other person, really, and that is the person concerned. There is a very distinguished woman in Berkeley who is the same class as the woman whose husband was an oil magnate--same class as the lady I speak of.

Fry: Meaning their class at UC Berkeley?

Hogan: Yes. And my friend married a very rich oil baron. And she went down very often to stay with her friends, in part because her husband had to travel on oil business. And when I began to hear all this stuff about--you remember--the Republicans running an ad in the local Orange County paper: "Needed: one congressman." You know the story, the ad for someone to run against Voorhis.

My friend was visiting this woman when her husband came in from a trip, and he was ecstatic. He was on a recruiting trip, and he was ecstatic about having found just the man for the job. In other words, he found him at the Duke Law School. Then this pure comedy of putting the ad in--of starting him with a few cases and having him practice law for a bit--join the Rotary and get known, Whittier alumnus--was all cooked up in advance. He was signed and sold to oil before he left Duke, which was after the war. He did Duke on the GI Bill. No? Well then, you're right--it was before. That's right, because he was in the law enforcement part of the navy.\*

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\*Richard Nixon received an LL.B. from Duke University in 1937, according to the biographical statement in Who's Who in America, 39th edition. Chicago: 1976-77.

- Fry: And they flew him out from Washington, where he was still in the navy, to have his first interview as a possible candidate.
- Hogan: In other words, he had been bought at Duke by the oil interests. Now I only heard this story about the wife of the oil bastard from this woman fairly recently.
- Fry: The husband couldn't have gone to Washington to meet him, could he?
- Hogan: He went to Duke, while Nixon was in law school.
- Fry: So the point is, there were many years of financial support of Nixon, or what?
- Hogan: I wouldn't know, but they're the kind of people who arranged for the Nixon Fund subsidization so that later she could only "afford a cloth coat." Do you see?
- Fry: Yes. Can you tell me what oil company it was?
- Hogan: I don't know. I could find out, but I don't want to get into it.
- Fry: I just wondered if it was the independents or if it were one of the major ones, because, you know, they were often on opposite sides.
- Hogan: I don't know. They had their own internecine warfare, yes. But--
- Fry: It would be interesting to know, if you can find out. It might have been that whole complex of independent oil companies who managed to work together.
- Hogan: I can find out by a phone call.
- Fry: Could you? Because that complex of companies also were the ones that backed in '52 the Republican's Werdel delegation that opposed Earl Warren.
- Hogan: Ralph Davies was among the independents for a long time. That's where the Kuwait oil came into Japan, you see.
- Fry: The Keck Oil Company, I think, was kind of a leader of this 1952 [independent] group.
- Hogan: Yes.



Fry: On the other hand, it could have been Standard Oil, because the majors had a hand, it looks like, in other parts of the 1950 battle against Helen in kind of a subtle way. Well, okay. Whatever you can find out would really be interesting to put in.

Hogan: The woman I quote is impeccable.

Fry: She's very careful?

Hogan: Extraordinarily.

Fry: I think we already have evidence, too, that Nixon may have been pretty much picked out by the time the ad was run for the '46 campaign.

Hogan: He was picked out while he was in law school.

Now, about Nixon's campaign against Helen. I think Helen would admit this: that campaign was lost in the primary. Manchester Boddy and she--he done her in. And the campaign and the press about it, as you were saying at lunchtime, drew an awful lot of her blood. And, not so much Boddy, as stupidity and party factionalism, is what did her in. You see, the Republicans used to have their fights in private and settled them--until [Ronald] Reagan came along and wanted to be president. [Laughs]

Fry: Yes.

Hogan: In California the Republicans settle things among themselves.

Fry: So they presented a united front.

Hogan: Yes. And Manchester Boddy did Helen in before she got to the starting line, you see.

Fry: Why do you think Boddy decided to run against Helen? She did have a clear field at that time in the primary.

Hogan: You find out. I don't know. Ask Helen.

Fry: You don't have any good friends who know that? [Laughter]

Hogan: No, I'm not a Southern Californian--I hate Southern California. I avoid it like the plague. I only used to go down there to stay with the Douglasses--because of them.

Helen and Melvyn

Fry: Why don't we go back to how you met Helen?

Hogan: I met Helen through Dan Totheroh.

Fry: Oh, the playwright.

Hogan: Yes. He just died a few months ago. He had written various things for them. In fact, they were playing in a play of Dan's when they married.\*

Fry: Oh, that was Dan's play?

Hogan: Mother Lode. And Helen did his Moor Born, which was Dan's best play probably.

Fry: Anyway, they did continue their interest with Totheroh, didn't they, over the years? In his plays?

Hogan: Oh, yes--very much so. And he returned up here from Southern California and lived next door to me up on Russian Hill. This would be forty years ago.

Fry: Give me a one-paragraph description of Dan Totheroh, since I'll no longer have the chance to interview him.

Hogan: Well, Dan was a very California person, interested in California. And had great success. First here--he ran the Little Theater at Berkeley. He did a lot of Bohemian Club--wrote plays and produced them and that sort of thing. And then in the open-air theater down at Carmel. And was heavily involved in, here, largely amateur dramatics. I don't think the director of the Berkeley Playhouse got more than rent. But there were a lot of people who started out in the Berkeley Playhouse--Irving Pichel, for instance. San [Samuel J.] Hume--that name means nothing to you.

Fry: Oh, yes it does.

Hogan: Well, Sam, the son of a bitch--[laughter]

Fry: Well, he kept that end of the drama spectrum in the Bay Area going too.

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\*They met in Tonight or Never by Lili Hatvany and starred together in Mother Lode in 1935.

Hogan: Oh, yes, surely, but he was an awful stinker. And Dan Totheroh went to Hollywood and did very well, and then went to Broadway and did too. And he was a very charming person, a real liberal, and continued his affection and intimacy with the Douglasses. Well, being a next-door neighbor and friend from the Berkeley days, naturally I met the Douglasses. And the main interest then was the migrant workers. Mary Helen had just been born--Helen brought back impetigo from the camps to Mary Helen.

Fry: Oh. From the migratory labor camps in the Bakersfield area?

Hogan: Yes. We had a series of summer schools, the School of Social Studies, residential summer schools, with the discussion based upon reading and some lectures at Mills. And Helen came there. And we had some rich alumni from up in the peach country. And Helen gave a very dramatic speech to a lot of people there about this. I remember this woman becoming hysterical--feeling guilty--as the wife of a rich peach grower about the condition of the migratory workers. Helen can tell you more about it.

Fry: Oh, that's interesting. Did you say that she contributed more to anything?

Hogan: I don't know. But it sort of knocked some of these awfully fat, rich bitches.

Fry: And then did you work with the Douglasses on anything in the pre-war period?

Hogan: Just USO, just the kind of things that everybody worked for. They held a sort of Sunday lunch-brunch thing out by the pool at their house down there to which I went frequently. And I gather nobody was formally invited--that you were invited to come and come back. And it consisted of a sort of continuous seminar on what's happening. This would all have been during the New Deal, you see. It was a sort, if you will, of an interlocking directorate of people from various fields concerned.

Fry: And this would have been groups Mel Douglas was dealing with at the time, too?

Hogan: Oh, they're all involved in everything here.

Fry: That's interesting. This was regular Sunday brunches?

Hogan: Yes.

Fry: So you could just drop in?



Hogan: Yes. And then Helen used to give "do's." She had a big "do" there for Eleanor Roosevelt once. Quite a party--everybody wanted to come. One of those things. And Helen had to say no to some friends.

Fry: You knew Helen also when she was national committeewoman?

Hogan: Yes, but I never got involved in that.

Fry: What did you think of Helen and Melvyn when you knew them here? Can you tell us more about their approach to projects?

Hogan: Their approaches were entirely different. They are very different people, although they generally agree pretty much. Not always. For instance, Mel was awfully unkeen on [George] McGovern in 1972 while Helen and I were driving around Vermont calling on every editor.

Fry: Oh, yes.

Hogan: Helen's intuitions are perfect. She comes out straight intuitively. She can tell a stinker from a mile off, or a phony. Now Mel is not one for quick judgments. He has to read and study and think and mull it over. Quite a different way in which they come to--

Fry: Conclusions?

Hogan: Yes.

Fry: It sounds like Helen might come to hers before Mel does to his.

Hogan: Oh, yes. He has a much more analytic mind than Helen. And he's much more scholarly. Helen doesn't have time--never did. She'd read anything if you put it in front of her and said, "This you have to read." Yes, she would.

Fry: How about the way they worked with a group?

Hogan: Well, they generally didn't. They had their own interests--separate professional and political ways of operating. No, Mel kept out of Helen's campaign. Very separate. Only one person can run a campaign, and if you hire professionals and have devoted friends, let them do it.

Fry: But he didn't make any speeches for her or anything, except just rarely?

Hogan: There was no reason for him to. Helen was running on her own--definitely and as a matter of fact. And there was no reason for Mel to stick his nose into it. No. Everyone knew he'd vote for her.

Fry: [Laughs] Sure. Well, earlier, you know, Mel was the one that I think led the way for Helen to be interested in public affairs by introducing her to the migratory workers. At least this is what Helen looks back on now and sees: that Mel kind of introduced her, after her disillusionment with the Nazis in Europe. And she got interested in the anti-Nazi group here, too, isn't that right?

Hogan: Well, remember that Mel also had lived through in Wisconsin the whole [Robert] La Follette [Jr.] period, which was much more public-spirited. And a Wisconsin farmer couldn't imagine the camps that the California migratory workers lived in, no. They don't have any migratory workers. And such hovels and dirt they couldn't conceive of. You couldn't run a dairy farm that way, no.

Fry: [Laughs] No.

Hogan: You'd contaminate the milk.

Fry: So that this was quite a contrast for Mel when he came out here.

Hogan: No, he had been through the tremendous legislation and progress of old Bob [Robert M.] La Follette, and they knew Bob's sons, Phil, governor of Wisconsin, and young Bob. And they were terribly progressive. Remember--old man La Follette ran for president on a separate ticket. So Mel had been indoctrinated very much with liberal thought and public policies. And Helen hadn't at all. Her mother was the stuffiest old dame you'd ever meet. And her father an engineer type. And her brothers--[laughing]

Fry: Yes. Well, then later on--let's see. Were you separated during the war because you were in England?

Hogan: But I came back twice during the war and each time saw the Douglasses. Or I saw Helen--Mel was in Indochina part of that time or in Burma, one of the times I came back.

Fry: And did you say you stayed with them in L.A.?

Hogan: Yes.

Fry: And lived in their house?

Hogan: I used to go down for long weekends, for instance, that kind of thing. Stay there--I'd just phone, say I was coming: "Is it all right?" A good deal of that time Walter [Pick], her cousin, was living there as their secretary. And I would always stay with Walter.

Fry: Can you give us a picture of their lifestyle at that time? Did they have many servants in the house?

Hogan: Yes. Ample--ample servants. And a gardener to keep the pool and all that. And generally a driver. And they entertained considerably and went out considerably. In other words, they were part of a social life, as well as the "pooly" life. I used to go out with them to dinner if I was coming down a weekend. They would just phone whoever their hostess was--most of these people had such big houses and staffs that it didn't matter. Like the [Edward G.] Robinsons--they not only had a house and staff, but a collection of pictures that was fantastic.

Fry: That's what I hear.

Hogan: Yes, yes.

Fry: That's the Edward G. Robinsons again?

Hogan: Yes. She'd been on the stage--Gladys Robinson.

Fry: Had Helen known her in New York?

Hogan: I don't know.

Fry: Were you there when Helen was making her film She?

Hogan: No, thank God. That must have been hell--

Fry: [Laughs] I think Alis De Sola was there for part of that.

Hogan: --because she hated it so.

Fry: Yes.

Hogan: Once was enough.

Fry: Were you a member of any of the organizations, like the Anti-Nazi League, that they were members of down there?

Hogan: No, I'm a Northern Californian. I'm a San Franciscan.

Fry: They didn't have Anti-Nazi League up here?

Hogan: They may have. If so, it never rang any bells--it didn't accomplish much.

Fry: Helen had her baby there in the thirties. Was her role as a mother like we would conceive it for middle-class Americans these days or more like upper class?

Hogan: Can you conceive of Helen doing anything middle-class style?

Fry: [Laughs] Well, she cooked a pretty good meal herself.



Hogan: All right--fine. But would you like to be dependent on your three meals a day from her?

Fry: Well, I wouldn't mind.

Hogan: There was one time I came here, yes, during the war. I came here. Mel was away. And Helen had Mel's sister-in-law and her couple of kids, old Mrs. Hesselberg, and her own two, and God knows who else living full time and three meals a day. And Helen was running it.

Fry: Yes, she said she just didn't have any help at all during the war. And I just could hardly see how she could function in a big, big house that way. But, no, you didn't answer my question about her and motherhood. Did she have a nanny for the kids?

Hogan: Oh, yes. Certainly. Also, through a great deal of this time, Walter was a live-in. And Walter could keep his eye on general, overall management.

Fry: Yes, so I guess he would be a good one to ask all these questions of.

Hogan: Oh, you'll love him. He's a grand guy.

Fry: Okay. Were you there when she first ran for Congress in '44?

Hogan: No, I was in Europe.

Fry: You were still in England.

Hogan: Nineteen forty-four, wasn't it?

Fry: Yes.

Hogan: No, the war wasn't over till the summer of '45.

Fry: So the next time you saw Helen was after the war, where? United Nations?

Hogan: I saw her, probably out here.

1946: General Assembly of the United Nations

Fry: Where should we pick up then? You and Helen at the United Nations? Or do you have something to say about it up here before we take on the United Nations?

Hogan: Well, Helen at the United Nations--remember that this was the first General Assembly. The U.S. had a huge delegation and Helen was sort of put in charge of "Hick." You heard of Hick?

Fry: No, what is it?

Hogan: Lorena Hickok--she was Mrs. Roosevelt's right hand. She wasn't, what's her name, Miss Thompson--no, she wasn't Tommy Thompson. But she was an old Albany, New York, newspaperwoman who became attached to Eleanor. Every member of the delegation--you see there'd be ten--was given a sort of wet nurse. And Hick was Helen's. They lived together at the Pennsylvania Hotel--the whole delegation did. And Helen was active in it, but made very few speeches--very few. She made one speech on NGOs [non-governmental organizations]. This was very interesting.

The AF of L was very anti-CIO, and the CIO international group, the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, wanted consultative status. And the other nations wouldn't give it to just the AF of L, saying, "It is simply a national organization." Well, the U.S. had to mobilize support for a resolution by the General Assembly requesting the Economic and Social Council to give consultative status to the AF of L. This was when the Reuthers [of the United Auto Workers] were being fought by [George] Meany, you see. Then they got together for a while, and then they split up completely again. But this was the beginning of part of that.

Fry: Is there a connection there between her speech on NGOs and the AF of L?

Hogan: The AF of L won. The AF of L then was scared to death of Communists. Meany still is--literally.

Fry: Did I miss something on the CIO?

Hogan: The CIO didn't exist yet. The AF of L would have nothing to do with the CIO, even in embryo. No, the AF of L was for trade unionism, not industrial unionism.

Fry: Oh, I see.

Hogan: Yes. One of the things that was very beautiful at that assembly was to see Helen and Mrs. Pandit together--two very beautiful women. I remember after the election there was an evening--the vote on the things that India wanted versus South Africa. India won hands down, and Mrs. Pandit came into the lounge and Helen grabbed her and instead of bending to kiss her, she took her sort of by the elbows and just lifted her up and kissed her. [Laughter] And there were great cheers in the lounge.

- Fry: Philip Noel-Baker was telling me how he and Helen also would have frequent lunches together and talk over the issues of the day.
- Hogan: Sure. Last time I saw him was at her house for dinner. On November 11th, 1942, just at the time of the invasion of North Africa, we put on the only broadcast that Mrs. Roosevelt did from that European trip, up in Glasgow when we opened the Imperial Hotel for survivors. And Phil Baker was her introducer.
- Fry: Did you know him at that time?
- Hogan: Oh, sure, yes. He had been parliamentary secretary of the Ministry of War transport. It was like our War Shipping Administration. Parliamentary secretary means he represented it in the House of Commons. The minister himself, Lord Leathers, was in the House of Lords. The British always do that. They have somebody in the House of Commons and somebody in the Lords. And the one who is not the minister himself is called the parliamentary secretary. He answers questions, puts through the bills, and does all the usual things.
- Fry: And behaves as--
- Hogan: As the minister would were he--
- Fry: There in that house.
- Hogan: Yes.
- Fry: Oh, I see. Tell me something about Philip Noel-Baker and the way that he operated as your British counterpart--he was sort of dealing with some of the same problems you had.
- Hogan: Exactly the same issues--torpedoing, supply lines, stores, space for storing gasoline (non-explosive--you know)--all the production problems of war. Repairing ships that got bombed. You see, the favorite target of the Germans was docks, naturally.
- Fry: Which presents a lot of repair problems.
- Hogan: Yes. Oh, also, at that time--'42--we didn't use Southampton or London or Hull or Newcastle and rarely Edinburgh. We didn't dare bring supplies into the south and east coast--no. We had to convoy them down from Bangor in Northern Ireland or Lough Neagh, the convoy spot near Bangor, up the west coast of Ireland. Those had nets--submarine nets. And we couldn't use the east coast or south coast ports. They had torpedo boats; they had all sorts of things. They sowed mines. They did everything. We had to use Bristol, Cardiff, Swansea, Liverpool, Manchester, and Glasgow chiefly.



Fry: Of course, when I talked to Philip Noel-Baker last summer, the conversation inevitably becomes one of disarmament and why we need disarmament.

Hogan: Oh, I've heard the two of them go on. They're pacifists you see. Well, you couldn't be a pacifist then during the war, no. That was silly. He also was minister of aircraft production. And by the time he came to the assembly he was colonial minister. I remember him trying to get me to explain to him about passages in the charter.

Fry: Oh, what the passages meant?

Hogan: The passages in the charter about non-self-governing territories. The English were very much upset by trying to interpret what is a non-self-governing territory. Because they had protectorates like Aden. They had the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man--all sorts of weirdances. Whether they were non-self-governing or not, that was the question. The Island of Sark is self-governing, practically. This was extremely difficult for them.

He is a very greatly respected person and was respected at Geneva, you see, prior to the U.N. at the League. He spent a great deal of time there. And he was never a Communist, although he had a son who was a Communist--ran for Parliament as a Communist. I think there's only one Communist that's ever made it into the House of Commons.

Fry: His son didn't make it?

Hogan: I think not. And Phil was interested in the arts--his wife was a dancer. That's why he hyphenated his name--to add her family name of Noel.

Fry: I see.

Hogan: And you see he did that, but he refused a peerage. He could have a peerage even today if he asked for one. But he didn't want a life peerage--he didn't want an uninheritable peerage.

Fry: Oh, he didn't believe in it, you mean?

Hogan: He's a Quaker, and Quakers don't go in for that kind of thing.

Fry: Do you think he was an important part of Helen's education in the U.N.?

Hogan: Very much, yes. Especially on the nuclear non-proliferation. You see, remember he's one of the persons the Soviets would listen to.

Fry: Why?

- Hogan: Devout Socialist. An intelligent man. An internationalist. They talk about peace--he really believed in it. Still does.
- Fry: I wonder why Helen didn't make any more speeches than she did at the United Nations.
- Hogan: Well, they had everybody else there.
- Fry: What do you mean everybody else? On the American delegation?
- Hogan: Yes, speeches were assigned.
- Fry: It would not have been her initiative then?
- Hogan: When you're on a delegation, especially if you're a new person at such meetings, you do what you're told.
- Fry: Were you able to witness any of her rare speeches there?
- Hogan: Why sure, because we used to chat together a lot.
- Fry: Well, why don't you just tell me what she was like making a speech in the United Nations.
- Hogan: Well, then Helen was very beautiful, and she was one of the ten best-dressed women in the world, and all that--got a great deal of publicity.
- Fry: What was her speechmaking like?
- Hogan: Excellent. She can deliver a good speech. I've written so many for her that I-- [laughter]
- Fry: But did she write her own for the United Nations?
- Hogan: No.
- Fry: No?

My day's experience working with Helen, just sort of for fun on her book [autobiography] makes me think that when you write anything for Helen it is never in a static state--it's always being changed. Is this true--that she would change her speeches, say in Congress, almost up to the last minute or did she just take them and go with them?

- Hogan: She used to go on "Town Meeting of the Air" all the time. Yes, but she accepts your drafting, but then she Helenizes it. It's hers when it finally comes out.

Fry: Did she memorize easily?

Hogan: Fairly well. She gets the logic of it and she--

Fry: Takes off from there?

Hogan: Yes.

Fry: Is there anything else to add on Helen in the United Nations?

Hogan: I can't think of it.

Fry: Did you see her friendship with Mrs. Roosevelt developing further during her United Nations stint?

Hogan: Yes, because they were together every day for long sessions. You see, they used to meet every morning to coordinate the people in the different committees.

Fry: Oh, right. Who was within her sort of inner circle--the Helen Gahagan Douglas inner group or subgroup--within the delegation? Do you know?

Hogan: Adlai, Eleanor, Senator [Warren R.] Austin (Vermont--remember?).

Fry: Yes.

Hogan: Who else was there? There was a man named S-a-n-d-i-f-e-r--Sandy we called him--who was Eleanor's adviser from the State Department. She's written a lot about him in the human rights stuff.

Fry: Do you know how her appointment happened, by any chance?

Hogan: No, ask her.

#### Comments on Helen Gahagan Douglas and Congress

#### House Foreign Affairs Committee

Fry: Are you ready to move on to Congress?

Hogan: Anything you want.

Fry: All right. You were coming back from World War II and landed in her home and in her office.



Hogan: Yes, we wrote for her a great deal.

Fry: You and your wife?

Hogan: Yes, she did. I worked a great deal on the British loan. That was for a very unfortunate reason. Harry Truman admitted that he made a mistake in cutting off Lend Lease to Britain much too early--left them stranded financially. And they couldn't complain. Later he saw it and so there had to be this loan. And there was considerable opposition to it--the Irish especially, and some of the Jewish groups, who wanted, oh, the Balfour Declaration put into effect right away, when the British were saying, "Let's go slow on Palestine." And the British had the mandate, you see.

Fry: Did they want Truman to use his influence--

Hogan: To force the British to create Israel right then and there.

Fry: Yes, with this loan as pressure?

Hogan: Oh, yes. They said, "Don't give the loan until they give us Israel." So there's no question about that, yes. Because we had to get every Jew we knew mobilized behind Britain.

Fry: That was one of your jobs?

Hogan: Well, the way things worked, yes, while I worked for Helen.

Fry: You worked primarily with Congress, but you said also with their constituents. I thought maybe you had done some "adult education" work in the Jewish community.

Hogan: Helen would arrange, and I would get from various congressmen, letters to them for and against the loan, so that then I knew what the congressmen themselves were hearing. Now, if we found a congressman from Chicago with strong Jewish letters coming in, we would find somebody who could get hold of the rabbi or the local Jewish group.

[end tape 2, side A; begin tape 2, side B]

Fry: Did the Catholics help mobilize opinion for the loan? Did Senator [David I.] Walsh?

Hogan: Of Massachusetts. He fought us. A good Democrat, but an Irish Catholic.

Fry: Did this permeate the Catholics, even the non-Irish Catholics?

Hogan: You see, the hierarchy is largely Irish Catholic. It certainly was then.

Fry: Okay, I guess that answers the question. Are you Catholic?

Hogan: I was brought up Catholic, but it didn't work. It had no effect on me.

Fry: You didn't have any connections at that point?

Hogan: No.

Fry: In the hierarchy?

Hogan: No. Well, yes, I could call on them. I'm not afraid of the hierarchy. Monsignor O'Dwyer was about as powerful a Jesuit as there was in the country.

Fry: Then, at any rate, in getting this loan through--why was Helen involved?

Hogan: She was on the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

Fry: Yes.

Hogan: The old system was that in the House it was called the Foreign Affairs Committee, in the Senate the Relations Committee, because it was said the Senators were too old to have affairs. [Laughter]

Fry: I never will understand why Helen was put on that committee as a freshman Congressman. I thought that was unusual.

Hogan: Well, you have to have a freshman pretty much.

Fry: Do you?

Hogan: She was one of the few women. Good God! They couldn't have had Clare Boothe Luce because she was a Republican. And also she and Helen could never see eye to eye on anything. Well, why not?

Fry: Well, usually women wind up on the Labor Committee or the Health, Education, and Welfare Committee.

Hogan: Helen was more loved and liked and respected. She'd done very well. She'd been in the House, though--

Fry: But she went on the committee the minute she got in Congress.

Hogan: Yes. She's damned good.

- Fry: Which I thought was amazing, how quickly she was appointed. She didn't know that this was going to happen.
- Hogan: No.
- Fry: So she had a pro-Truman, pro-England position on this loan--to support it. Was this because it was an administration move?
- Hogan: Well, if it hadn't been that, I certainly could have convinced her of it. The delegations didn't have any offices in the U.N. so Helen used mine a great deal.
- Fry: Oh, so she got to know you really well then as a co-tenant in your office?
- Hogan: If she wanted to make phone calls or there was some typing or something, we could always take care of her.
- Fry: So you must have been one of her sort of fellow educators and mentors in that period, too. And what did your wife work on?
- Hogan: My wife had been a newspaperwoman. She'd been on the Scripps-Howard paper here. She graduated from the Columbia School of Journalism. Her father was a professor at Berkeley.
- Fry: What name did she write under here?
- Hogan: Betty Ballantine. And she wrote speeches chiefly. Or magazine articles. You know how it is when you're working in an office like that. Or she'd answer a letter that comes in that's a stinker. I could forge Helen's signature pretty well.
- Fry: So your wife did not have a single-assignment job?
- Hogan: Neither of us had any connection in Helen's office with anything except friendship.
- Fry: Yes, but I mean in the things you worked on.

#### On Atomic Energy

- Hogan: Oh, well, Helen was wild about civilian control of atomic energy. I remember Betty and Evie and Helen and I stopped the car and listened on the car radio to the first bomb explosion in the Pacific.
- Fry: Oh, Eniwetok?



Hogan: Yes, and Helen felt that the world had come to an end and that mankind was going to kill himself. And she made one of those impromptu speeches, which lasted several miles [laughs], the "What is the world coming to?" department, and all that.

Fry: Were you there while her bill was going through on atomic energy?

Hogan: Yes. You see, originally it was called the McMahon-Douglas bill.

Fry: Yes, that's the way I remember it.

Hogan: Yes, yes.

Fry: And I'm not sure--did that name drop off of it before it passed?

Hogan: Yes, it seemed to be so, yes--as I remember it. He was a lovely, charming, effective person. Quite young. I guess he was younger than Helen--I'm not sure.

Fry: Helen tells of someone calling her office and telling her that this was going through a committee--I don't know whether it was a committee in the House or a committee in the Senate--for armed services control of atomic energy. And at that point she got the help of her brother in New York and a number of other attorneys to quickly try to turn this around in some way.

Hogan: Well, one of the things that was most helpful, and that I remember getting hard at work on. One of the guys was Jim [James P.] Newman. He's dead now, but I'm sure she mentioned him.

Fry: He was a scientist, right?

Hogan: Yes. In fact, she rented his house and we lived in it for a while. Most helpful was the Federation of American Scientists or whatever its name was. They saw the danger of proliferation and of military control. I remember, for instance, taking the almanac and sending a form letter that we sent, addressing them to the chairman of every department of physics and of every department of chemistry in the country--in every college. And we had great assistance from eggheads around the country in the various colleges and universities, to mobilize the intellectuals against military control of atomic energy. I remember sort of being in charge of that. Well, of course, naturally they were. And a lot of them had been in on it. And people like [Robert] Oppenheimer would go all the way with us and others wouldn't. Like--who's that stinker over there at Stanford?--Edward Teller.

Fry: But by and large, you did have the support of the academic community?

Hogan: Yes.

Fry: The majority of them, would you say?

Hogan: Yes. And a congressman is very apt to pay attention to a letter from the head of a chemistry department in his constituency on such a matter as this.

Fry: How did you handle the armed forces? Did you have anything to do with the Pentagon?

Hogan: Hell, no!

Fry: [Laughter] I just wondered. They're very formidable as opponents in Congress.

Hogan: I have a great mistrust of the military.

Fry: But they're difficult to handle.

Hogan: I have a great mistrust. I remember this, that at that time, there was great mistrust in this country of the wisdom of Truman's dropping the bomb. There were many people who said that what Harry should have done was to take some remote island in Japan, warn the Japanese that it was going to be obliterated, to get all the islanders off it, and blow it up. Instead, the two bombs were on very populated areas and an awful lot of people disapproved strongly of ending the war that way. It made us guilty forever as the first persons ever to do it. And, you see, if you talk to the right Quakers, you'd mobilize them, and the right Unitarians, in a minute.

Fry: That's a very small minority and I don't think they had anything to do with convincing the military.

Hogan: They didn't. They didn't expect to. But they do write letters.

Fry: I still don't see how it passed. Well, that was right around the time of [Winston] Churchill's Iron Curtain speech and the stage being set for--

Hogan: People thought then that the Russians would never get it. Think of the time we wasted with the [Bernard] Baruch business. All the time that we were insulting the Soviets, expecting them to agree to--

Fry: To what?

Hogan: Limit their own fire capacity.

Fry: Before they had the bomb?

Hogan: Yes.

Fry: At this same time, within this bill one of the issues was--

Hogan: Inspection.

Fry: Inspection and international control.

Hogan: Of course.

Fry: This was one of the things, I guess, that was least likely to occur, right?

Hogan: Ah, but we wouldn't say so. We wanted to take the proper "we'll let you peek at ours, if you'll let us peek at yours."

Fry: Yes. And that went on for a long time.

Hogan: Because we were so far ahead that--

Fry: Who else did you work with on this that you can tell us about?

Hogan: I don't know.

Fry: Did you write any of the speeches?

Hogan: I must have. I could crank out a speech in an evening, then; I was full of vigor.

Fry: You didn't have any other job there when you first came back? This was sort of a transition period for you?

Hogan: Yes. Until I went up to Winant and joined the U.N.

Fry: You saw some kind of thing like that coming because of Ambassador Winant's talk with you in London before you left. So you were kind of waiting, at this point in your life.

Hogan: Oh yes, surely. Well, all kinds of people that think the way I do were strongly opposed to military control of anything and especially something brand new, not understood, but obviously lethal, and probably suicidal. It still is.

Fry: Were you tempted to go back to your adult education career at this point, just on this problem of the need for disarmament and nuclear control?

Hogan: Oh, no, no. "A," I am not a pessimist; "B," I have a terribly specific mind in this connection. I think it is a total waste of time to talk about peace. I think you have to talk about Northern Ireland, the Middle East, Cyprus, Zaire, South Africa--specific. Peace is specific.



Hogan: War is specific. I don't think there is any universal--peace is so vague. I'm all in favor of good health but people catch pneumonia. How do you cure pneumonia? How do you cure the Northern Ireland situation? You can talk about peace until you're blue in the face and it does you absolutely no good up there.

Fry: So that as it relates to disarmament you would say disarmament--

Hogan: Equally, equally. It also must be attached to the specific.

Fry: Did you agree with Helen on her disarmament views?

Hogan: Yes, but it has to be done by agreement with governments--an enforceable agreement--with governments who have their own interests to preserve. So a lot of clergy have been getting together and talking about and praying for peace--I think that's fine because that keeps them out of other forms of mischief, that's all.

Fry: [Laughter] Spoken like a true former Catholic.

#### The Domestic Side

Fry: I'm anxious to know what it was like at Helen's home while she was a congresswoman.

Hogan: Oh, pandemonium. She had a wonderful housekeeper. Black, a middle-aged woman, serene, never raised her voice, never on anything. Didn't seem to mind too much if dinner was a little late. I can't remember her name. She was married. She's still living. But she was wonderful, just wonderful. Now, also, having Evie living in--

Fry: This is Evelyn Chavoor?

Hogan: Yes. There was all this homework. We're driving Helen to something, you see, or picking her up. Plus the two kids were there going to school, Mary Helen and Peter. And Peter was being full of adolescent obstreperousness.

Fry: Beyond the nanny stages, I guess, at that point. [Laughter]

Hogan: Oh, yes.

Fry: I think then she changed Peter to a different school or something, didn't she? That would really be a trial. Was Melvyn ever there?

Hogan: Yes, but he was off making movies, paying the rent, I guess.

Fry: So he really didn't have any physical connection--

Hogan: I think one of the reasons she asked me to come and live right in there was to have an adult male in the house. Yes.

Fry: Were you able to relate to Peter any?

Hogan: Vaguely. Peter didn't want to be related to.

Fry: It would be a one-way street.

Hogan: I was available. [Pause] No, Helen has said that her one regret is that she didn't have more time to give to the kids.

Fry: Was this when they first began to notice that Mary Helen was going to grow very, very large or was that earlier?

Hogan: No, she was growing then but not to the fantastic height--but that was very hard to handle and there was very little you could do about it. I can remember--oh, Mrs. Gahagan. One time later I guess it must have been. Mary Helen cried to her grandmother about being so awfully tall and Mrs. Gahagan said--which would be so like her--"Well, God decided that, dear, and I'm sure it's all for the good." Well, to an adolescent girl becoming a very tall girl, you know that doesn't do any good at all. But Mrs. Gahagan was off into sort of the new thought and all that kind of--she would have gone in for Transcendental Meditation, I'm sure.

Fry: Oh, really?

Hogan: Oh, anything like this. There was a man that she went to see all the time or hear, a famous new thought or that kind of type of clergyman in New York. He had a national reputation and she believed strongly in all that he had to offer.

Fry: Sounds like a trendy person.

Hogan: Yes, the kind of people who speak of "the Spirit." Because I remember one at the U.N. from a religious, powerful organization. She was so afraid that you wouldn't get spiritual values--and that was spelled "spirchal." [Laughter] She was militantly against birth control, was afraid the U.N. would endorse it.

Fry: Was Mrs. Gahagan living with them in Washington?

Hogan: Oh, no. She lived in New York. No, I don't think Mrs. Gahagan wanted to live in a house with a couple of young, adolescent kids. No. The house wasn't big enough to give her the type of serenity that comes from being with "the Spirit."

Fry: Did both kids go to private schools then?

Hogan: No, Peter went to a public school there. Because I went to his graduation--I guess it was junior high. I went with him. Helen asked me to come along.

Fry: Was that the only other housekeeper they had, just this one woman?

Hogan: With the kids gone all day she didn't come for breakfast, and frequently we'd phone and we'd pick up Lyndon [B. Johnson] and drive him down to the Capitol and often he'd drive home with us and stay for dinner.

Fry: Oh, really?

Hogan: Yes.

Fry: So you had a lot of talk about congressional issues, right? [Laughter]

Hogan: Yes.

Fry: I must ask you then to tell me about Lyndon, and Lyndon and Helen.

Hogan: Oh, no! They were a handsome couple. Lyndon was an admirer, like Helen, of Mr. Sam [Rayburn]. Mr. Sam gave--Helen was one of his favorites--and he gave her very good advice which she always followed. Now it was perfectly clear then that Lyndon in the House was on the way up, no question. It was also perfectly clear when Lyndon became president that he would be a much better president than he could be as a Senator or congressman from Texas because Lyndon was genuinely liberal. he had to vote segregationwise on all of that. Remember, this was a long time ago.

Fry: Before our civil rights movement.

Hogan: Yes. And, remember, he was in the same fix as even as liberal and lovely a person as Bill [J. William] Fulbright. He had to sign that damn manifesto. If you don't, you can't be Senator from Arkansas. If you want to be Senator from Arkansas and have an influence--which certainly Bill had in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee--if you want that, then you have to stay in office. Lyndon believed generals. Lyndon was a great president on the domestic side. He was truthful and honest. He believed in the New Deal and FDR and Sam Rayburn, just as Helen did. But Texas is Texas.

Fry: Do you remember how he fitted in, for example, on the atomic energy control issue? Did he want the military to have that?

Hogan: I doubt it. I think Helen could have--



Fry: Persuaded him?

Hogan: Yes.

Fry: Was he contributing to Helen's education or was she contributing to his education? Which happened more?

Hogan: Even-steven. He was an awfully shrewd operator. Mind you, they were very young then. Helen then was much better known nationally than Lyndon.

Fry: Yes, I guess she was.

Hogan: Surely. No question about it. All you had to do was walk through the capital with one or the other and you could see the difference.

Fry: Are you talking about tourist response?

Hogan: Public response, yes.

Fry: What was it like to walk through the capital with Helen then?

Hogan: She was stopped all the time by other congressmen or a politician or correspondents or someone.

Fry: She didn't have any trouble getting publicity, I guess?

Hogan: No, no, no. Editors were always writing to ask her to write. She turned down a hell of a lot of that kind of stuff. And invitations to speak.

Fry: Well, do you think that Lyndon's sense of how to manipulate something through Congress or how to kill something in Congress helped Helen understand the ropes better?

Hogan: Oh, yes.

Fry: When did their friendship get so thick? Had she already been in Congress for a while?

Hogan: I think so, yes. I think she was there a term before him.

Fry: Because she went in before the war ended.

Hogan: Yes. Oh, it must have been. [Pause]

As president, Lyndon fell for the generals, that's all. He got rotten advice. I'm talking about Vietnam.

Fry: But now in Washington when you were with him, I suppose you all had dinner together every night.

Hogan: Not every night, no.

Fry: But when he was there, you were there.

Hogan: Yes.

Fry: At that time, did you see this militarism?

Hogan: No, no, no. I didn't. He didn't have it, no. We argued then about civil rights, that was the thing. The generals didn't seem as vicious then as they did when they were sending our boys in--500,000 of them--in Vietnam. That was an entirely different situation.

Fry: It was not an issue. We didn't have a war on.

What else did he and Helen have in common? Just good friends?

Hogan: A strikingly handsome couple together. She's so much better looking than poor Ladybird. That's true. Then, certainly.

Fry: Well, Helen would be better looking than almost anybody. She'd be tough competition.

Hogan: The competition there was that awful woman, Clare Boothe Luce, who was a publicity seeker.

Fry: Was Helen competing?

Hogan: Never, but I think that Clare felt she was competing with Helen.

Fry: For public acclaim, you mean? Not for Lyndon.

Hogan: No, Helen was concerned, and she would use her name and publicity value for her causes. How can you get a reactionary ever to do that?

#### 1950 Campaign

Fry: Did you help Helen with her campaigns before 1950 or should we go on with the 1950 campaign?

Hogan: I know so little about the '50 campaign. I was an international civil servant. I was here for part of it. I ran into things and people and so forth, yes.

Fry: What were you able to observe?

Hogan: I was shocked at the whispering campaign against her, absolutely shocked. The thing that interests me very much about this is that the whispering campaign, as we found out later, was heavily subsidized. It cost \$350,000 cash and it's important to remember that the people who would fall for that would vote for Nixon. When I ask myself how did they vote for Nixon, the answer is clear. For instance, down in Carmel or all over the state, one of the most common parts of the campaign was--"Well, you know, the Douglasses were asked to leave Carmel." Well, they were never asked. I would ask, "Who asked them?," "Why," and so forth. You never could get an answer--"Yes, but it's true; I heard it from an unimpeachable source, yes. They were asked to leave Carmel."

Now, there were crazy Nazis down there in Carmel, too, or Fascists--plenty of them. We knew them all. You could find out. A person who knew all about them was Ella Winter, and her husband, Lincoln Steffens. They knew all about them and they had a spy down there, from the Waterfront Employers Association.

Fry: Who had the spy?

Hogan: The right wing. A very funny man who was a retired sea captain and who bought a house, retired, and had all of the left-wing literature, and entertained. And the house was bugged and everybody was asked in and it was clearly run by the FBI, CIA, and/or the Associated Farmers or the Waterfront Employers Association or something. This was all exposed later here. They did the whispering campaigns. They would go to Legion meetings and get the whole crowd. "Yes, they were asked to leave Carmel." Now, if somebody's a retired colonel and says that around Legion meetings, people believe it. See, the worst part of a retired colonel like that is if he really believes it. Then they are the vicious ones, effectively vicious, you see? Yes, you see. And that was what was significant to me in the campaign. You ran up against this, all the time.

Fry: You kept hearing people repeat those things to you?

Hogan: The same things, yes, so that therefore there was a state-wide campaign of destructive whispering.

Fry: Tell me about the \$350,000.

Hogan: That was spent on the whispering campaign. We found that out later. Helen's brother found it down in Florida, at a club. It's perfectly clear--if you had your own ear to the ground--what was happening.



Fry: Do you know anybody who got one of the phone calls toward the end of the election?

Hogan: No, they were south.

Fry: Did you get to watch any of the speeches or anything like that during the campaign?

Hogan: Oh, I remember a lovely party. I took some friends. It was held at Pacific Grove or Del Monte--that part of the country--a lovely buffet supper where all the cooks and waiters and bartenders of the union down there put it on for Helen. They got the food and fixed it all and came in their uniforms and it was a very jolly, good party.

Fry: You were kind of aloof from the political structure in California?

Hogan: I was only here on vacation. For this kind of thing, if I'd had free time I would have worked fully on it. Also, I couldn't have worked too obviously publicly, no.

Fry: Because you were a civil servant.

Hogan: Yes. In effect, yes.

Fry: So after that, what were your own observations about how the defeat affected Helen?

Hogan: I think inside she was deeply hurt, but I think she has schooled herself never to indicate that fact. You'll notice even when she talks about that campaign or other matters she very rarely mentions Richard Nixon. Her contempt for him is so great.

Fry: That it is unspeakable.

Hogan: Yes. If you tell her something about him, she just simply says, "Of course."

Fry: She told me she was constantly being pressured in every campaign thereafter to come out for the Democratic candidate and make a speech.

Hogan: She has been offered considerable money to do a series for the highest paid papers and magazines and so forth or to come out with one blistering speech and call him every name in the book. She won't.

Fry: She made an interesting comment to me one night which I'm going to tell you just in order to get it on tape. Remember after Nixon resigned and had gone to San Clemente, he was sick with phlebitis?

Hogan: Phlebitis, of course. I'm going to get this on tape! That is psychogenic illness. He couldn't stand up on his own two feet and take it and answer. No, certainly. Go on. [Laughter]

Fry: Let's see. I was at Helen's Vermont home, and that evening one of the networks called Helen from here and I believe another one from New York, asking her where she would be the next day or two in case Nixon succumbed because they would instantly want to call her. Or did she have a statement she would like to make now. Helen said, "Certainly I will not. After all, this man isn't even dead yet."

So she hung up the phone and came back to me and she said, "Ever since that 1950 election I get so tired of this. Every time Richard Nixon does anything, I'm besieged by the press. It's been like we were Siamese twins all these years."

Hogan: I thought of writing him after all this hubbub of the Frost interview is over, and telling him that Helen is ill, and asking if he has ever thought of preparing a statement, a reasoned, thought-out statement in advance. Because I can say that the networks bothered Helen continuously when he was considered in a dangerous condition and he must do that.

It's like the time I blew my top and wrote to the Chronicle about Mary Helen. Julie Eisenhower was complaining to one of the columnists about how awful it was to hear what was being said on the radio and by certain commentators about her dear father.

Fry: Oh, during Watergate.

Hogan: Or now that he's gone, yes. This was after he was retired. I wrote to the columnist and quoted this and the Chronicle published it, saying, "I happened to be with Mrs. Douglas's daughter at the time when day after day, hour after hour, the radio kept questioning Mrs. Douglas's loyalty." That's all. I haven't heard from Julie since. She seemed to shut up. I don't know whether I shut her up.

Fry: What did you and Helen do together after 1950?

Hogan: Oh, everything. [Laughter]

Fry: Should I ask you to elucidate?

Hogan: Oh, I've always been running into Helen. I've been back to California at least every year and I've been in Southern California, but I'm much more apt to see her up here in New York or in Washington. They had a New York residence for a long time. They took over Isadore Lubin's apartment. The one before the Riverside Drive one was Lube's, and

Hogan: then they took this one and it's been a long, long time. There's always a meal there! [Laughter] You know the way the place is run. Then in summers I go up to Vermont; I have friends near them. They all get on very well together. Then the Cohens see Helen. When I was living in New York, Helen and/or Mel used to come for dinner. Then I'd get the young people in and they'd have the time of their lives.

Fry: What do you mean "the young people?"

Hogan: No, after I retired I taught for four years at Drew University, chiefly about the U.N. I used to get the students who were from all over the country to come in for supper, half a dozen of them, with Helen or Mel or both of them. Helen came over and spoke, in the 1972 Nixon election, for George McGovern. She was still on the combination of big government and big industry and armaments--you know that speech. [Laughter]

Fry: You mentioned then in the next election, in '72, when Nixon ran against McGovern, that you helped her stump the state for McGovern.

Hogan: Up in Vermont and New Hampshire because we were concerned also there. We elected Governor [Thomas P.] Salmon in Vermont.

Fry: Did you help in his campaign?

Hogan: Yes, and we would also slip over--it's so easy--into New Hampshire because we wanted to keep Senator [Thomas J.] McIntyre in, because New Hampshire is one of the dirtiest states in the country. That governor of theirs is outrageous.

Fry: Can you give us a picture of campaigning with Helen? That's what we'd really like to have.

Hogan: Well, you get somebody in a community to gather some people for a lunch or whatever, an evening. You try to group them all up and Helen shakes hands when she comes in--"Hello, hello, hello." She's just her most gracious, charming self. Then she makes a speech. She likes to talk to newspaper people, and editors like to have an interview with Helen and it just goes along until you're all limp--answering questions, phoning ahead, "We're going to be late," [laughter] and all that.

Fry: You were her travel secretary in all that? Did you make some speeches too?

Hogan: Why should I speak when Helen does? One time I did make a speech, yes, because she was an hour late or something. Somebody introduced me as a close friend.

Isn't that almost enough? What more do you want?



Fry: I don't know. I don't know what else there is!

Hogan: I don't know.

Fry: You should! You're the one who has lived it. Do you have anything else to say about Helen?

Hogan: She's lovely, she's lovely.

Fry: What do you think of her brains? [Laughing] Don't you love her mind?

Hogan: I like her instincts. She's intuitively very wise. What time is it?

Fry: It is 4:15. Let's stop now.

#### American Civil Liberties Union of Northern California

[Interview 2: May 13, 1977]

[begin tape 3, side A]

#### The Formative Years

Fry: We're going to start as far back as you can possibly remember on this whole ACLU [American Civil Liberties Union] movement. Apparently it was founded in 1934 but there was a series of attempts before then.

Hogan: That is another question. I know the answer to that. From way back when, long before '34, the ACLU consisted of one man, an Englishman, an immigrant, who was a member of the California bar. His name was Austin Lewis. Now, he was an old-time British Labor party man, a Socialist. and an activist, and a charming, delightful dinner guest. He was a really wonderful person. Nobody could have been more sincere. He was involved in the early defense of civil liberties in the cases of Max Schmidt, the bombing of the Los Angeles Times, in the Tom Mooney case and all of that, way back.

He was involved in the litigation and defense of civil liberties in connection with the Socialist party here and in connection with trade unions especially. He was supported by members of the bar, the libertarian types, the law professors, and the intellectuals generally. He was widely known, widely respected, and until his death, was a vigorously active anti-Communist, anti-Leninist, anti-Stalinist. Very much so. He had been a great admirer of the IWW, Industrial Workers of the World, who were the original activists in the West.

Hogan: Along came 1934 when we had the general strike. That came after some longshoremen had been shot by the police, and the public was revolted by it. That led to the general strike. It led to the great march up Market Street. The police just simply stayed away. Then there began to be some vigilantism from the right wing. There was a group called the Berkeley Nationalists, I believe, and a university professor was, according to the Berkeley Gazette, the head of it. It was amusing because several families lived in Piedmont who were connected with the shipping industry and these vigilante boys, in cahoots with the American Legion, surrounded Piedmont; you couldn't enter it by automobile or leave it unless you showed them you resided there. Then they also beat up the Communist newspaper place near the city hall in San Francisco.

There was just enough of that kind of thing to make the old people who had been on Austin Lewis' supporter list furious. I guess they considered themselves to be members of the ACLU--to say, "Let's get together and stop some of this nonsense." Because it was sheer terrorism. For example, I was crossing Piedmont. I happened to be driving a car with a friend of mine whose daughter was one of the biggest ship owners. But the Dollars and the Alexanders and lots of such families lived in Piedmont and, of course, they had to be protected.

The idea that the longshoremen or anybody else was going to march over--because then they'd have had to take a ferry--and walk up and take Mrs. Dollar's diamonds or burn her house was crazy. I haven't the faintest idea what they thought--"they" meaning Harry Bridges, et al, who were reviving the whole idea of striking and of trade unionism in the shipping industry. The shipping industry had been deunionized a long time before and they had had the so-called "slave market" for the longshoremen on the waterfront every morning, making up stevedore gangs; men had to pay to be hired.

There were enough people who were wise enough to all of this and who were not afraid of Harry Bridges, not afraid of Communists at all. To be afraid was paranoia. Sure, Bridges' men could strike and stop the ships but they had no dangerous revolutionary ambitions. So a group of people formed largely what became the original board of the civil liberties union. There were here two people who were on the national board of the ACLU: Alexander Meiklejohn and George West, who was the chief editorial writer of the San Francisco News (the Scripps-Howard paper in San Francisco).

George married as his second wife Marie de Laveaga Welch, whose father happened to be heavily involved in shipping, and she was very liberal. He was the chief owner and director of the California-Hawaiian Sugar Company, C&H, with the big Crockett refinery. Her mother was a deLaveaga of the Spanish land grant family. They owned Orinda, and San Benito County and a few other pieces of property.



Hogan: When some industrialists tried to get through Proposition 1, which was an amendment of the state constitution which really would have stopped unionization--George was the chief editorial writer, and he was told he had to write an editorial endorsing number one. George got air time (there was only radio then) and made a brilliant speech in which he resigned from the News and would have nothing to do with number one. Number one was defeated and it was the beginning of the political victory. It was so repressive.

Now, the people who had fought back among the unions, the bar, and clergy (like Bishop Parsons) formed the nucleus of the beginning. I was with Meiklejohn then. George and Alex [Meiklejohn] were both members of the national board and close friends of Roger Baldwin; the Roger Baldwins' daughter is named Helen after Helen Meiklejohn.

If you had a list of the members of the original board I could tell you more.

Fry: I put down a lot of names here. These aren't only the original board; they came in at that time and later.

Hogan: Let me see it. [Examines list] Clarence Rust [1938] was an excellent volunteer lawyer and did a great deal of legal work for the ACLU. The same with Phil [Philip] Adams [1939]. Jim Caldwell, an English professor at Berkeley--'46--that late, yes, but Jim had been very sympathetic always. The ACLU always had the support of large numbers of Berkeley and Stanford and other institutions faculty, a great deal. In other words, the eggheads went all the way out. Alice Heyneman was later [1952]. Bill Roth--you know Bill Roth [1953]. Yes. Glenn Hoover was Mills College. [Reads from list] Marie Welch, Helen Salz, Alex Meiklejohn, Glenn Hoover, Charles Hogan, George West. George P. Adams was chairman of the philosophy department here at Berkeley. Hugo Ernst and Sam White were labor. Mary Hutchinson, George Tolson. Harold Chapman Brown was head of the philosophy department at Stanford.

Fry: You philosophers really had the market cornered.

Hogan: Sure. Now, we ran into heavy difficulties in the very early days. Ella Winter--you know Ella Winter?

Fry: Now, that's some of that early group: Ella Winter, Sam White, Fremont Older.

Hogan: Yes. Ella Winter was the widow of Lincoln Steffens and then married the playwright Donald Ogden Stewart. Sam White, labor, Fremont Older was the editor of the San Francisco Enquirer. Tom Ward. Miriam--of course!

Fry: Miriam Allen de Ford.



Hogan: Yes, she just died. A writer. Lillian Symes I'll come to again. Besig was brought up to Northern California because there was so much to do. We were having all of this vigilantism.

#### Vigilantism and District Attorney Earl Warren

Fry: Could I ask you another couple of questions on that period. You were over here in Oakland where all of this paranoia was centered--

Hogan: Not only Oakland. San Francisco. I was just giving you an example of the silliness of all this business.

Fry: The interesting thing to me there is that this was a period when Earl Warren was district attorney here in the Oakland area. So what did he do?

Hogan: Earl Warren was at that time as district attorney here a complete right winger, not a civil libertarian. He was then very much doing what [Joseph] Knowland told him to do.

Fry: Which was what? What did the district attorney's office do with the vigilantes?

Hogan: Nothing, nothing.

Fry: It was the same lack of action that--

Hogan: Absolutely. Nothing.

Fry: Did you know if any overtures were made to try and get the support of the law enforcement community under Earl Warren? Because he was very powerful then.

Hogan: They would have been wasting their time. The Republican party then, when Earl was district attorney here, was under the control of George Cameron of the Chronicle, Knowland of the Tribune, the Chandler family with the Los Angeles Times and was completely reactionary. Totally.

Fry: Do you know anything about what Warren and his office did during the general strike?

Hogan: Troops! All over the waterfront. They didn't come on the campus that time. That was later. [1964 when Edmund G. "Pat" Brown was governor.] [Laughter]

Fry: I also wondered if you had any confrontation with the Knowlands?

Hogan: You didn't confront the Knowlands, dear. [Laughter] No, I knew the Knowlands. One of the Knowland sons was a fraternity brother at my time in college.

Fry: That was in William Knowland's generation--Joe's son.

Hogan: Yes. I was brought up with the Knowlands.

Fry: So did you have any contact with them during this?

Hogan: On this kind of thing? Of course not. They said "no" to anything. They felt the waterfront strikers were revolutionary and they thought that Harry Bridges was a Moscow-directed Communist. Whether he was or not I don't know, but they were never able to prove it or get rid of him. They were trying to get rid of him, of course--deport him. They went on and on and on about that. The Oakland Tribune had never supported, in those days, anything that was pro-labor.

Fry: Now, on the actual organization of the ACLU--

#### American Civil Liberties Union Factions and Relationships

Hogan: There were two big fights among them. For a while the director (this was before Ernie [Ernest Besig] came) was the chaplain of Mills, Dr. George Hedley. George was thought to be somewhat, maybe, sympathetic toward the Communists. This is an epicyclical little fight but it was significant in its day.

Fry: He was put in as the first director?

Hogan: Yes. On the board were Lillian Symes, a writer (she wrote a good history of American militants) and her husband, Travers Clement. They were outright Trotskyites. Those two, Symes and Hedley, got in a big squabble, and we had a terrible meeting of the board about it in the hopes that things would calm down. But they didn't calm down a bit. So the board decided they would do whatever I decided after thinking it all over. I was the first chairman.

Fry: How did they get to that point?

Hogan: Well, maybe they thought I made sense. [Laughter] So we had a luncheon meeting. Everybody showed up. Hedley made a speech. Symes made a speech. There was great discussion and I decided to recommend to the

- Hogan: board--which it accepted--that we request the resignation of both Symes and Hedley. There we were without a director and in a tough spot.
- Fry: Symes, but not her husband?
- Hogan: It didn't matter. He just went along wherever she was. He was a follower. Yes. Then we were in a tough spot because we were without a director and we ran the office sort of volunteer-casually for a while until Chester Williams came and helped us from the south, and fortunately Ernie [Besig] came and took over. Then the question was something of just getting members and raising money, because we had more business than we could handle. The anti-union, anit-migrant labor, anti-all that kind of thing. These were the days when the sheriffs were simply pushing the migrant Okies and the Arkies to the next county line. It was that kind of chaos in the thirties.
- Fry: We have an interview with one of the sheriffs in which he very willingly describes all this.
- Hogan: Sure. This is why we needed the ACLU then. You asked me what did we do with the authorities. The "authorities," honey, were acting just like stinkers. In other words, they wouldn't admit women who came to hospitals and were in labor. Yes, we were having that kind of thing with the authorities. The authorities were scared to death of the Associated Farmers and the California Packing Corporation and so forth. Yes.
- Fry: Could you spell out what the line of power was between the Associated Farmers and the various sheriff offices? Was it simply money for their campaigns?
- Hogan: The banks, the big lawyers. The banks had mortgages on the farm. I could name banks.
- Fry: Name them.
- Hogan: The Bank of America had foreclosed on so much California property that it stopped foreclosing. With the decline of agricultural prices we had to have the AAA [Agricultural Adjustment Act]. That kind of stuff. You have to remember we were in the Depression at this point. Deep Depression.
- Fry: I understand from my reading that there was also a problem of deciding on your relationship with other good liberal organizations.



Hogan: That's the next point that I was just going to come to. We had another fight. The board of the national ACLU is a very distinguished and influential body and quite large. I'd say it must have been fifty. It still is. Some are still alive. Roger Baldwin is much alive. In fact, in this connection anybody doing this ought to read the latest biography of him which goes thoroughly into all of this.

There were many non-Communists--Roger Baldwin was one of them--on the national board who supported "united fronts," that is, including Communist organizations. These were the days when Leon Blum was prime minister of France with Socialist and Communist support, and the phrase was "united fronts." The national board went along quite a way with united fronts. Two members of the national board came out here and addressed our board. Mary Van Kleeck was one of them. Finally, the board kicked her off the national board for being a Communist. If you want all that history, it's in Roger Baldwin's latest biography.

Yes. He admits now a little bit more than he certainly would have then. By the way, over twenty-one years in the U.N. I was with Roger all the time. We were close friends before that; we still are.

The San Francisco crowd on the local board flatly refused to do anything in cahoots with Communists. In other words, yes, the situation here was such that any hinge with Communism or Communists would have made us impotent and we had no Communists. Whereas New York was telling us, "We all ought to face this all together." Our situation was the only one in which at that time local people felt that there was, because of Bridges, a danger of Bridges and the migrant workers, a danger of, literally, revolution. So we refused to join with them. Now, relations between the New York National Civil Liberties Board and Northern California remained very bad for a long, long time over this going along with and including Communist fronts.

Fry: It must have gone on up through the Fifties.

Hogan: Yes, dear.

Fry: Or so I thought when I was reading to prepare for a Sara Bard Field interview.

Hogan: They were never Communists, but many people felt they might be. Sara and [Charles] Erskine Scott Wood.

Fry: I thought too that the ACLU in northern California actually and officially split off from the national.

Hogan: It was never really under the control of the national.

Fry: So it was separate?

Hogan: They're related but the Northern California branch always was a maverick.

Fry: That means when you paid your dues to the Northern California ACLU a certain percentage would not go to New York, right?

Hogan: It does now but it didn't then. As a matter of fact, New York was having to subsidize us then in the early days before we began to get enough money. The kind of liberals that will join the ACLU are rarely rich. There were a few, yes. I remember the time when we didn't have a director really and there was a lynching in Santa Rosa. A very prominent woman, a socialite, sent a check for \$100 (which was a fortune to us then). All that she said on it was, "Go get 'em." She was the daughter of a multi-millionaire, a United States Senator.

Fry: Who?

Hogan: The discoverer of the Mesabi Range, the iron ore in northern Minnesota, Jean Macauley, the daughter of Senator [George T.] Oliver.

Fry: Was she in California?

Hogan: Yes, they lived in Burlingame then.

#### Prewar Cases: A Sampling of Issues

Fry: I'm interested to know what your major expenditures were in these early years.

Hogan: Lynchings and things like that. We had a tar and feathering. All sorts of things--name it. Beating up strikers. Yes.

Fry: Did you have any problem deciding how to spend your rather meager funds? In other words, you might have had to say no to some things.

Hogan: The ACLU nationally and locally has never had enough money to pursue all the cases. We had to confine ourselves pretty much to things like lynchings or tar and featherings, to abuse by the police; and efforts at deportation. But a lot depended on how many volunteer lawyers we had and how much time they could give us.

Fry: I sort of felt that since you had a hotbed of philosophers on this board--

Hogan: Well, George Adams was not a rich man, no.

Fry: But in view of your limited finances, maybe you and some of the other philosophers made a big contribution here by trying to connect the philosophical idealistic objectives of everybody with a priority system of what cases to take.

Hogan: We would disagree with your point completely. We were not interested in idealism. We were interested in constitutional government.

Fry: How did you set up your priorities then?

Hogan: We did our best with all we could do.

Fry: You didn't have a formal priority system?

Hogan: We took cases in general which could make good test cases.

Fry: From a legal point of view?

Hogan: Yes.

Fry: Cases that you felt could lead to a landmark case eventually?

Hogan: Yes, where the right was blatant; where there were sheriffs who were doing nasty work.

Fry: Has this criteria continued in the last couple of years?

Hogan: I haven't been associated here for years. I left California at the time before Pearl Harbor and never lived here until two years ago. I've been here every year; I always had lunch with Ernie Besig every time I came, yes. But I lost track completely. It was hard to follow all this from the embassy in London during the war.

Fry: According to my notes, there were some efforts to oppose anti-picketing, hand bill ordinance threats until World War II.

Hogan: Yes, certainly.

Fry: There was a misdemeanor law at one time for anyone helping an indigent (which translates to Okie) enter the state.

Hogan: Yes, we had all sorts of things like that. "Border patriots" we had on the state boundaries.

Fry: There was also the Charlotte Gabrielli case. She was a little girl who didn't salute the flag in elementary school. Do you remember that?



Hogan: I certainly do. She probably was a member of the Jehovah's Witness group. The same thing came in another form later here at Berkeley, the time of the [loyalty] oath. You know about that? [Laughter]

Fry: Yes, of course!

Hogan: Just the same principle involved. By the way, one of the strong supporters of the ACLU who resigned over the oath was chairman of the psychology department, he refused to take the oath, he was Ed Tolman for whom Tolman Hall was named. His wife was on the board-- Margaret Chase Tolman. They lived across from the Meiklejohns.

Fry: Oh, they did? It was a small world, wasn't it? Where did you live at this time?

Hogan: A great deal in Oakland, a great deal in San Francisco. I lived with my family at home for a long time, in Oakland.

Fry: I wondered if there was any difference in ACLU people from different sides of the bay. There was a commutation of [Warren K.] Billings by Governor Olson in 1940 that I think ACLU was involved in.

Hogan: Of course it was; of course it was, yes.

Fry: Did ACLU initiate it?

Hogan: There were so many people involved in that. Both the Tom Mooney and the Billings thing. You see when they got a Democratic governor, he was sworn in at midnight and Mooney was let out, pardoned, at 12:02.

Fry: It must have been his campaign promise.

Hogan: Oh, sure. Governor [Culbert L.] Olson, who turned out to be a great disappointment to the liberals.

Fry: What was the controversy he got into with his son?

Hogan: His son was working with his father in some state office and turned out to be no good.

Fry: Did the ACLU have anything to do with the State Relief Administration where there were charges of people being Communist?

Hogan: The anti-New Dealers accused FDR and Eleanor Roosevelt of everything, everything, right down the line. The ACLU didn't wany any of it in any form.

- Fry: Back to this whole business of the role of the Communists in the thirties. As I understand it, the Communists did a great deal of work with all the activities going on in labor education classes and things like this.
- Hogan: They did the work of stimulating but they never really took over much. They were never a genuine threat. That was paranoia, plus Communist propaganda. [Laughter] They thought they were more powerful than they were. But the human need was such that the New Deal programs couldn't be stopped.
- Fry: Yes. Then things like starting the ACLU were essential. Communists were more in the mainstream then, although quite a minority, than they ever were afterwards. Is that impression correct?
- Hogan: Either before or after. The Communist party of the U.S.A. doesn't exist today, really. It's totally disqualified.
- Fry: Do you think it was more able to be in the mainstream in California, for instance, than elsewhere?
- Hogan: It was, because of the extreme need for organization on the waterfront and elsewhere and for the totally inhumane conditions in California agriculture. Remember also, San Francisco had also been a good union town. Los Angeles, never. For instance, San Francisco always had the taxi drivers, the bakers, the bartenders, the printers who were always unionized. On the waterfront and at sea it was very different. But Los Angeles had a consistently anti-union policy and after the leftist silly people blew up the L.A. Times, the Times led the anti-unionism. Here the unions were never supported by the Chronicle or the Tribune.
- Fry: I wondered if the Chronicle had a policy of supporting the unions.
- Hogan: The policy became liberal only when Paul S. Smith became editor, and that was later.
- Fry: What about the Los Angeles ACLU?
- Hogan: It has always been quite separate with different problems, different membership. This state is two states, at least, and we've got enough up here to mind our own business. They, too.
- Fry: Did Besig go down to L.A.?
- Hogan: No, no. He happened to be down there, however, when we began organizing up here.
- Fry: Oh, you mean he wasn't living there?

Hogan: I don't think so, no. He's a New Yorker, a Cornell man.

Fry: So he didn't go back to Los Angeles?

Hogan: No, no. But ask him.

Fry: Okay, I hope I have a chance to. Were you away when the ACLU here began to help the conscientious objectors?

Hogan: Yes, yes. The person who really led that was Erskine [Wood]. He was a retired army colonel and graduate of West Point. He loved it.

[end tape 3, side A; begin tape 3, side B]

Fry: There was a general advisory committee set up at that time, about 1939. Do you remember such a thing?

Hogan: I don't remember, no. That doesn't mean that they didn't. In fact I don't remember exactly my dates as chairman. I do remember that one of the things that we had a terrible thing about then was a great effort nationally to fingerprint everybody, by J. Edgar Hoover and all those people.

Fry: What did ACLU do? Were they able to successfully stave that off?

Hogan: Yes, temporarily.

Fry: Did you do it as a local thing?

Hogan: No, we fought it as a national thing. The ACLU endorsed [Governor] Olson, Ellis Patterson, and [Senator] Sheridan Downey and, following protests, they retracted this.

Fry: You endorsed?

Hogan: Yes! The ACLU never endorses individuals, it's like the League of Women Voters. [Laughter]

Fry: It sounds like you had one swing at it and decided never again.

Hogan: Yes.

Fry: Who protested?

Hogan: Members.

Fry: Remember that later on there was some criticism because the membership didn't really have anything to do with the actual functions of ACLU. They just contributed the money and the board was deliberately self-perpetuating for its own longevity and survival.



Hogan: My view, and certainly I knew the membership, is two things. The membership was very varied. Two, it had an ample number of male and female prima donnas who would have loved to have taken it over. Three, the vast majority of the membership had confidence in the board. They could come to board meetings. They could cast votes. They could do anything they wanted, and the last thing they wanted to be bothered with was referenda and so forth.

The principles under which the ACLU works are notorious. They're public. It issues press releases explaining what it's doing and the kind of person who understands that, trusted the board. This is why some silly Democrats probably tried to get Olson and Downey endorsed. Well, the membership would have laughed at that. Certainly. The phones would start ringing and they'd say, "Ernie, what in the world is happening?" Yes.

Fry: Is there any summing up that you'd like to do of this formative period?

Hogan: No.

Fry: Okay then, we can move on if you're ready.

There were a couple of people who were on that board we're kind of intrigued with because we did have one interview with Sara Bard Field. Their place on the mountain out of Los Gatos became quite a meeting place, "The Cats."

Hogan: I don't want to talk about The Cats. I've been there, yes, certainly; everybody's been there. There was another place right near their place. Marie Welch West's lovely place. She bought a retreat up there in the early thirties, I guess. A delightful house in two parts built by Maybeck. I guess her daughter still has it, or daughters. Marie wrote a great deal of very good poetry and was very close to the Woods. We used to picnic a great deal and stay over, sleep out in sleeping bags with a lot of the poets--the [Robinson] Jeffers would come up for Sunday lunch--that kind of souls. The [Lincoln] Steffenses.

Fry: From Carmel.

Hogan: Yes.

Fry: It was a nice half-way place between Carmel and San Francisco. Can you describe Jeffers and his wife?

Hogan: Oh, God. Yes. Jeffers was a very handsome man, interesting looking. If you didn't know who he was, you would have turned around maybe and looked at him. He was never voluble. Charming. Una was a ball of fire. Yackety-yak all the time. Full of views. She's been

- Hogan: involved in the Irish Renaissance and was quite a manager. They had twin sons who were adolescents at the time we're speaking about. It is a case where one often felt that Una was the manager and Robin [Robinson] also ran, but of course that was not true. He was a very great man but socially kind of understated.
- Fry: Did you ever get him into good conversation?
- Hogan: Oh, yes. He was very easy.
- Fry: Did you ever get into a conversation with him on such things out in the world as civil rights?
- Hogan: He had all of the right opinions, instincts, about that kind of thing. He was considered very dangerous, he and the Steffenses, by an awful lot of Carmel.
- Fry: As what? Too radical?
- Hogan: Yes.
- Fry: Was it communism again? Did he ever have that?
- Hogan: He was no more Communist than the man in the moon! At that time they'd think anybody was. You know that Eleanor Roosevelt was, don't you?
- Fry: [Laughter] Yes, I remember that.
- Hogan: The Douglasses had a house down there--Helen and Mel. People used to go by and spit at it.
- Fry: That was a little bit later wasn't it? Up into the forties?
- Hogan: Helen, you see, was notorious in connection with the migrant workers.
- Fry: Do you think that had anything to do with why Helen sold that house in Carmel?
- Hogan: I told you why Helen sold that. She sold it because she needed money. They had Mel's mother, their own two kids, Mel's sister-in-law, and her kids, and Mel entered the army as a private. She had the taxes on that house and all those mouths to feed. She needed cash.
- Fry: She told me when the roof needed to be repaired that she was in Washington, and that's what sort of did it and she unilaterally sold it.

Hogan: You mean the house in Carmel?

Fry: Yes. But I wondered too if it was a comfortable environment, politically.

Hogan: Oh, that didn't bother her. They found that that big house, with the swimming pool and all that, in Hollywood was awfully expensive, far more than they planned.

Fry: Back to Sara Bard Field and Charles Erskine Scott Wood. We have people who are working on biographies and if you can talk about their relationship and the texture of their relationship--

Hogan: Kay [Sara Bard Field's daughter] can give you all that.

Fry: Well, a number of people can, but I'd like to get your viewpoint too.

Hogan: I loved them. They were charming, delightful, excellent hosts-- good view, good wine, making their own wine.

Fry: Who else did you meet there?

Hogan: Ansel Adams. Yes, I'm thinking of people who are well known. There's one on this list that wrote--

Fry: Yes. Miriam Allen de Ford?

Hogan: Yes. There were other photographers who were great friends of theirs, too, like Paul S. Taylor's wife, Dorothea Lange. Sometimes members of the board of the national ACLU who would come through and who happened to be great friends of the George Wests or of the Meiklejohns or whatever, would be around. Like I remember--because I saw so much of him later--Isador Lubin, the founder of the Bureau of Labor Statistics and then later one of the new secretaries of F.D.R. That kind of person kept coming through. Now, Lube, for instance, and Helen Meiklejohn wrote a book together called The Coal Industry in Britain. She was an economist at Brookings. Lube later, under Averell Harriman, was commissioner of labor in the state of New York.

#### Finances

Fry: There's one other question that I wanted to ask you on the ACLU back in the thirties. Did the ACLU have paid attorneys or was there a mixture of paid and unpaid?



- Hogan: Well, we had to pass the hat. We had our regular membership. We had largely volunteer attorneys. Then when somebody would give a tar and feathering, we would issue an appeal and we'd pay a lawyer what we could. But then, you see, when a thing like this would happen, an awful lot of checks would just come in like Jean MacCauley's "Go get 'em." We'd issue a special appeal.
- Fry: So everything was kind of ad hoc?
- Hogan: The cases are ad hoc. You don't have a tar and feathering every day, no.
- Fry: Did you have office expenses that required an annual budget?
- Hogan: Oh, sure.
- Fry: Had you had that pretty much from the beginning?
- Hogan: Well, sometimes we had to go into our own pockets or phone Marie Welch or somebody like that, shake her down for the rent.
- Fry: These people on the board were largely middle class? Or what we would call "upper socio-economic level," which was necessary, at that time, for your survival?
- Hogan: Later, for instance, I know an interesting thing that happened. A member of the music department made it his job to get every member of the music department at Berkeley to sign up to become a member! And people like George Adams and Jimmy Caldwell were proselytizing, yes, or seeking, suggesting, membership. Now, one of the other people from Berkeley that were very active in the ACLU was Max Radin. Did you know Max?
- Fry: I know who he was. He's the law professor who didn't get appointed to the State Supreme Court. The governor announced he'd appoint Max and then changed his mind.
- Hogan: There's where Warren was just crazy, just completely crazy. Anybody who was afraid of Max--good God! The whole Prall family was something there--his wife's family was something, the Prall family. They're all dead now.
- Fry: But in something like a court appointment, did the ACLU ever try to advise? There's this old legal advisory council that was set up to choose Supreme Court appointees.
- Hogan: Was there?
- Fry: Yes.

Hogan: Well, I'm sure that under Warren they would have at that time been quite reactionary.

Fry: Warren was one of the Qualifications Commission. I wondered if the ACLU ever wrote letters on things like this.

Hogan: I'm sure we did. For instance, this is difficult remembering on an individual case of this kind. But I remember we had a big dinner on something in San Francisco, a banquet, and Max presided--brilliantly, of course. He was charming.

Fry: That was the last question I had regarding the ACLU.

Hogan: One person you don't have on there is Joe Thompson who was on the board. He was one of the Thompsons. He was the brother of Kathleen Norris, and was a single-taxer, as she was. They never got over that.

Fry: But she would never have been on the ACLU board, would she?

Hogan: She might have been. She was unpredictable in that sense. Joe was head of the San Francisco Opera Association and the symphony association. He and his two brothers built up the Pacific Electric Manufacturing Company and you could always phone Joe for a hundred. Now, on the other hand, Joe probably would send you the check without asking him.

Fry: So they just knew to do this.

Hogan: So was Charlotte Mack. You don't know Charlotte?

Fry: No.

Hogan: Oh, Lord, she ought to have been done by your people. She's the person who brought modern art to California and she was rich.

Fry: How did she bring modern art to California?

Hogan: She bought it and brought it here and then kept buying it.

Fry: Did she put it in galleries?

Hogan: Go over to the permanent collection of the Museum of Modern Art in San Francisco and check for Charlotte Mack's collections.

Fry: She's still alive?

Hogan: Oh, no. She died fairly recently, very old. I'll tell you a story about her.

Hogan: Charlotte was a belle in New Orleans and hated all that. She, along with Mrs. Warren Greogry of Berkeley (who was a member of ACLU and very rich)--the Gregory house is that lovely big one, which she left to Will Wurster on Hawthorne Terrace in Berkeley. She and Mrs. Gregory (Mrs. Gregory was a Hardy, the bookstore people) were the first class at the new University of Chicago with Dewey, Veblen, and Millikan as professors.

Charlotte went to teach in the Philippines where she met her husband, a widower, very rich and involved in oil in San Francisco. He was related to all the wealthy Jewish families. Charlotte wanted to live in sin, he didn't want to. She married him and took over a tremendous family--the grandchildren and all that--and was marvelous to them. She kept up the scrapbook for the ACLU. She collected paintings. She also kept putting people through medical school or giving someone a year at Martha Graham's or God knows what--anything like that. She was terribly generous and more than liberal minded.

When she died, they opened her will. She kept telling everybody that everything that she had was labeled. It was, in terms of possessions. These figures may not be exact but they're relatively so. She left an income for life and \$50,000 in I think cash, to a niece who was an alcoholic. To the niece's daughter that Charlotte helped raise, she left \$75,000 and oh, say \$50,000 a year until she was thirty-one, giving her a dowry and letting her get a profession.

All the rest--it may have been a trust fund of four million she hadn't gotten rid of--she left to the Rosenberg Foundation. She had been on the original board appointed by the Rosenberg brothers when they formed the foundation. Funny little wispy folks. She also inherited a great deal of money from the parents she didn't like in New Orleans. She gave that all away too. But she brought modern art to San Francisco.

Fry: She was on the board early, the ACLU board?

Hogan: She never was on the board. She kept our scrapbook for us. Charlotte was a person who believed in personal participation. Now Charlotte would always give you a hundred for a case. You didn't have to ask her twice.

Fry: You make the funding sound so easy.

Hogan: We could have used much more. Also, a hundred dollars was a lot of money then.

Fry: At this same time in Alameda County in the district attorney's office, talented young lawyers were working free so that they would be on the scene in case anybody resigned.



Hogan: That was true in every profession. Remember, I got my Ph.D. in 1932 while Hoover was still president.

Fry: And you have been making up for it ever since. [Laughter] Did you ever work for free? After you got your Ph.D.?

Hogan: All the time, yes.

Fry: I mean in your profession.

Hogan: If it wasn't for free, it was damned near that. Maybe it was for singing for a cup of coffee. [Laughter] No, I never made any money on that. I always had a family home to return to during the Depression, which is important. My father was able to feed his family until he died, age 90.

Fry: What year did he die?

Hogan: Nineteen fifty.

Fry: In other words, you weren't someone who would actually have starved to death without an income. You had something.

Hogan: Yes. Board and room and laundry, the use of the family car, which was helpful. [Break for lunch]

Helen Gahagan Douglas: More on the Congressional Period

Fry: We lack the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights in our discussion. Also, I was wondering if you couldn't add some more to what we were talking at our last session concerning Helen Gahagan Douglas in her congressional years. We need to get a good picture of how her office operated and how it functioned; I think I warned you last time that I'd ask you to give a little bit more about that. Do you have some new descriptions?

Hogan: No, and I'll tell you why. You're going to talk to Walter Pick and you're going to talk to Evie Chavoor. Now, they were her two administrative assistants. They were there all of the time through all of it, so they'll tell you the intimate details.

Fry: I didn't realize that Walter Pick was really an administrative assistant.

Hogan: Yes, in Helen's office. Not always. Then Evie took over in complete charge.

Fry: So they weren't there at the same time?

Hogan: Ask them. Good God, I never know.

Fry: Were you there when she brought in the black woman as receptionist?

Hogan: She always had a black one around.

Fry: You weren't there when this first happened though?

Hogan: I don't remember it at all.

Fry: You couldn't comment on the reaction of the other congressmen and people to this.

Hogan: Oh, "there she goes again" would be it. Remember at that time there were some vicious, evil people like [Theodore G.] Bilbo--real racists in the House and Senate. So that's unpopular now; they suppress it.

Fry: But they didn't then.

Hogan: Oh, hell no. They had a way of saying "nigra" that was just between Negro and nigger, just half, because you weren't allowed to say "nigger" on the floor. But the southerners had a way of saying--I can't do it--"nigra" that was the same damn thing.

Fry: Do you have any little anecdotes that would give us a vivid image of what this was like at that time? Helen was always tangling with John Rankin. She just had an ongoing battle with him.

Hogan: Sure. Of course. Definitely. He was an obscene man.

Fry: Do you remember witnessing anything in the office?

Hogan: He avoided Helen's office. I never saw him in it, no. He thought she was a pestilence that would go away, the same way as the flu epidemic.

Fry: Did many lobbyists come into Helen's office?

Hogan: God, yes! Everybody thought that Helen was going to endorse and make a speech for whatever their cause was. The "crackter" they were, the more they'd go to see people like Helen. Sure.

Fry: Crack-pot people like what?

Hogan: Vegetarians or you name it. Washington is crawling with them.

Fry: It does seem like everybody is an advocate of something there.

Hogan: Yes. Helen was an advocate of all sorts of lots of things.

Fry: What about the really big, well-heeled lobbyists who represented the financial establishment?

Hogan: They wouldn't waste their time on Helen. They knew Helen perfectly well, and they knew she wasn't going to support all the things that the American Bankers Association wanted or National Association of Manufacturers, no. Why waste their time and their postage? Lobbyists have to produce and it would be a waste of time for them to work on Helen.

Fry: The oil industry did work on her.

Hogan: It sure did. It spent millions, yes. You knew that.

Fry: When you say spent millions do you mean--

Hogan: Fighting her.

Fry: In her campaign?

Hogan: Of course, because of the tidelands oil. Put that in your kite and leave it there.

Fry: Well, Helen's told us about it too.

Hogan: I know. It comes back to oil all the time. Or the big agribusiness interests, one or the other in California then.

Fry: When you were working in her office, did you see any of these people coming in?

Hogan: They don't come in, that is, the agribusiness or the oil people don't.

Fry: They work primarily on a campaign then?

Hogan: On the campaign end. They contribute this kind of junk material against her. They'd waste their time talking to Helen.

Fry: There was some awfully important legislation on tidelands oil during her term in Congress.

Hogan: Not only legislation but court decisions, interpreting Spanish land grants and all sorts of things. Comparing Texas and Louisiana.

Fry: The width of the offshore shelf.



Hogan: That's right.

Fry: But did that have anything to do with a congressman's office?

Hogan: Yes. Helen was adamant on the national federal control of the tide-lands oil and she was equally in favor of the 160-acre law limitation on federally financed irrigation water.

Fry: I meant the court litigation that was going on.

Hogan: That's another matter entirely.

Fry: It would be separate?

Hogan: Yes.

United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights: Some Commentary on Its Creation

The Context

Fry: Here is a copy of the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights." As I understand it, you thought that we might go through this and you would give me an oral documentation of it. First of all, tell me where you were when this was being brought up? I notice that in 1945 there was what was called a preparatory committee.

Hogan: Yes, I'll tell you all about that. I went to the United Nations in August of 1946. At that time there was meeting what they called a nuclear commission on human rights and the nuclear commission on the status of women, two bodies established by the Economic and Social Council. In fact, the charter says that the council shall establish commissions such as human rights. The nuclear commission was meeting. What that really was in each case of the women and of the human rights was to plan a program of work for each, for a commission on each subject. Rather than taking action, what it did was to plan the whole thing.

The women's equality thing then was a subcommission, and there were plans for a subcommission on freedom of information and a big international conference on freedom of information. I secretaried that, and I secretaried the subcommission and the conference which met in Geneva from the month of March of '48.

Hogan: The overall plan was, there would be something called the bill of human rights, and it would have many parts--like, for instance, a universal declaration of human rights that we'll talk about, which was a declaration and not a treaty. Then, that there would be a whole host of other--not declarations--but covenants under the declaration of human rights, which would be treaties. There was a great deal of discussion as to whether there should be two. It turned out there were to be two covenants on human rights: one on civil and political rights and another one on social and cultural rights.

Now, there was contemplated then a convention on the status of women and there had been a number of conventions open for signature under that heading, as for instance, the political rights of women and the nationality of married women. There's been a convention on statelessness. There's been a whole host of them. Then the narcotics conventions were all rewritten under this general field. Then there was also the convention on the status of refugees, and it has a protocol and a tremendous amount of international law is now enforced in this field.

You must remember that when the charter was written, [Joseph] Goebbels was still minister of propaganda in Germany and people had had their belly full of propaganda and they wanted free information. Also, the Hitlerian idea of women--church, home, and children--was repugnant. The western group was strongly for women's rights and the spread of them through the western world, and so were all the easterners too. Eastern Europe is a "female paradise," and we should take our perfect customs from them.

There was a great deal of debate as to whether the declaration should be a declaration or a convention, but it was finally decided that it be a declaration only.

Fry: What side was the United States on?

Hogan: Declaration only.

Fry: And Eastern Europe?

Hogan: In the final voting on the declaration, everybody voted for it except the Soviet Union, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Saudi Arabia, the Union of South Africa, and one other. They abstained. Oh, the Ukraine and Byelorussia yes. They all abstained. Everybody else voted for it. But everybody had a hand in the writing of it--all the member states and especially the nongovernmental organizations were very active. They had been active in San Francisco in the American delegation and then went on to be more active in the United Nations.

Hogan: Now this declaration went through many phases--the drafting committees, and finally it was approved by the Third Committee, a committee of the whole of the General Assembly and then presented to the Assembly itself in 1948 where it was adopted with the vote I told you.

Mrs. Roosevelt was the chairman of the Commission on Human Rights through all of the period that I mentioned, and sat for the American government in the third committee of the General Assembly. I think we had about seventy meetings of the committee of the whole of the General Assembly on this. It went on morning, afternoon, and night.

Fry: Was this with the whole Assembly being the committee?

Hogan: All member states were members of all of the committees of the General Assembly, yes. The economic and social council then only had eighteen members and the commission also had eighteen members.

Fry: There is one more question that I have. Apparently up to that time, over the centuries, most such things like this have never included anything but political rights, nothing on social and cultural and economic rights.

Hogan: Yes, that is quite true.

Fry: At any rate, it was all an advance, wasn't it?

Hogan: The League had a big department concerned with cultural rights and with the protection of copyrights and so forth, for intellectual property and patents. There was an organization in each field and there were treaties. Also the International Labor Office, the ILO it was called, which was established by the Treaty of Versailles, its constitution is an appendix to the Treaty of Versailles.

The inspiration for that came from the Americans, from old Samuel Gompers, who was a member of the delegation to Versailles, the head of the AFL. Under the work of the ILO there were many conventions operative in the field. To give you an example of an economic-social issue, conditions of work at sea. There were also conventions on prostitution.

Fry: But this was all just within the last few decades.

Hogan: Yes. Surely. They were trying, they were trying is the answer, yes. But now everybody looks forward to a great deal of amelioration and of getting it somehow down on paper and into treaties that can be enforced. Now the general definition of the difference between civil and political rights on the one hand and economic and social rights is that civil and political rights are judiciable, they may be in a court; economic and social rights generally are not.



Fry: That would be a problem.

Hogan: Yes. On the other hand, the ILO had been moving and the New Deal moved toward enforceable legislation in these fields. And in the countries which have had strong Socialist movements that was especially true. Also, under Fridtjof Nansen there were lots of conventions concerning refugees and the League had a high commissioner for refugees too.

Fry: So you had all that as a background to build from.

Hogan: That's it. In other words, feeble steps had been taken in the right direction. How's that?

Fry: Okay, and people were well aware that there was a connection.

Hogan: Oh, definitely. Oh, yes.

Fry: The committee that worked on this must have undergone uncalculated complexities to get so many different cultures to agree.

Hogan: Yes, that's part of it. There were people who were of the legal tradition that wanted to spell it all out and made the drafting interminable. Others, especially those of the British and American tradition, wanted statements of general principles.

[end tape 3, side B; begin tape 4, side A]

Hogan: In general you might say that the Code Napoleon countries wanted it all spelled out. The British common law countries wanted a brief statement in the declaration and then, as with the American Constitution, work it out in practice.

Fry: Did you agree with the latter?

Hogan: Oh, yes, but I was brought up in the British tradition and the American tradition. Our constitution is very brief.

Fry: In this initial part of the nuclear commission's work, where did you fit in?

Hogan: In the early days of the U.N. the staff was so small, everybody did anything—you pitched in or were sent to do whatever there was, to try to make sense.

Fry: You were on that officially though, weren't you?

Hogan: I was an employee of the secretary-general, a member of the secretariat. I was not representing the American government, no.

Now, let me start reading. In the preamble it is in the Lockean tradition, which is the British-American tradition because it says "The inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world." Now, that's a ringing declaration. Note, it says "human family." Note that the comparable French and American declarations of the rights of man speak of man. This term was forced by the women to be "human family." But the fact that it's inalienable and inherent really goes back to the same passages in our Declaration of Independence.

#### A Delineation of Each Article

Hogan: "Whereas man is endowed by his creator with inalienable... Human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people." That's from the four freedoms of Winston Churchill and F.D. Roosevelt.

"Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse," note, "as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law." That created one of the biggest fights that we had because the Soviet voted one way on that, then the next day changed. I'm sure the wires were very hot from Moscow to Paris because the Soviet man one day was arguing that the only people who should rebel are the people in the capitalist countries. The wording would also give the Soviet people the right to rebel against tyranny and oppression. [Chuckle] Well, this created a pandemonium and the Soviets finally had to give in and accept this because otherwise they would have been up a very difficult alley as concerns the colonial peoples. They don't have colonies, they say.

Fry: So they couldn't logically carry on their objections to imperialism.

Hogan: Heavens, no.

Fry: First they voted no. Then they voted yes the next day, is that right?

Hogan: They voted to accept this wording, that you do have the right to rebel against tyranny and oppression. And they were stuck with it. Old man [Alexei] Pavlov screamed and snorted. The Soviet people in the Soviet Union have no need or right to rebel, have they? No.

Hogan: "Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in cooperation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms." There are seven references to human rights and fundamental freedoms in the charter.

Then it says, "A common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge" to the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms. This declaration has become a part of, I think, some thirty-five national constitutions.

Fry: So it had a tremendous worldwide impact in that respect. You think of declarations as just something given out into the empty air usually.

Hogan: Next it says, "Now therefore, the General Assembly proclaims"--in other words, this is not a treaty; it's a proclamation. The governments declare that they will use this as it applies "among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction," which is a deliberately vague phrase. It means colonies and other such arrangements.

Fry: Including satellite countries?

Hogan: I'm not talking now about that. They say that they shall strive "by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance....

"Article 1. All human beings are born free and equal." This is a new phrase, if you will. "Free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed," it doesn't say by whom, "with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in the spirit of brotherhood.

"Article 2. "Everyone" Everyone. It doesn't say man.

Fry: That's another influence of your women's group?

Hogan: Of Minerva Bernardino, the ambassador of the Dominican Republic.

Fry: She was a leader?

Hogan: Oh, she was indeed. She had been the secretary of an intergovernmental body called the Inter-American Commission on the Rights of Women.

Fry: While we're on that, in our suffrage history series, two of the women talk about how they worked very hard in this period to get into the preamble the phrase "equality between the sexes" as well as between races and so forth.



Hogan: I'll come to that in a minute. As a matter of fact, the Commission on the Status of Women has changed its name to something like Commission on the Equality of Rights Among Men and Women or Between Men and Women.

"Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration," all "without distinction of any kind." Then it lists the ones. There was a terrible fight over this. Everybody wanted to put in other ones. But Mrs. Roosevelt kept saying, "I want to keep this small enough so that the whole declaration can be put in full in every classroom and the entrance of every church in the world. Keep it small enough."

Now, let me tell you the ones they agreed on. "Race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth"--now, note--"or other status." That was the way of taking care of the ones that were left out. This is not totally enumerative, do you see.

Fry: I suppose a phraseology like that is easier to put into a declaration than into a treaty.

Hogan: Yes. This shall apply to human beings whether the government under which they live is "independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty." This applies to people such as--no one is excluded. In other words, it applies to colonials as well as the people of independent countries.

Fry: Was there a fight over that by the Russians because they had what we call satellites?

Hogan: Excuse me, that's exactly what it's for, yes. But they would have said that Guam is a satellite because it isn't a member state. We have satellites, don't we? Panama and all sorts, they say.

"Article 3. Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person."

Fry: They veered from our own declaration--

Hogan: Yes, the pursuit of happiness--

Fry: Was left out.

Hogan: Yes.

Fry: Why?

Hogan: I'd have to go back and read all those records.

"Article 4. No one shall be held in slavery or servitude." This had to do with peonage and matters like that. "Slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms." The U.N. has conventions on slavery now because there is still some of it in the world.

Fry: Was that aimed at any particular country at that time?

Hogan: Yes, slave labor and peonage. Slave labor in the Russian labor camps. There was a big study of them the U.N. had to do. This is meant to be inclusive in every sense. Also, black African Muslims used to go to Mecca and not return.

Fry: So that was a part of the old African slave trade still going on?

Hogan: Sure. [Article 5] "No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment." That's self-explanatory.

[Article 6] "Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law." Under many systems of law, including many Moslem systems, women don't have the right as a person before the law. Only their husband or father can sue, or in their name.

[Article 7] "All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law." That sounds like our Fourteenth Amendment. "All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination." This is something that has been very important to the Soviets. They would like to make a crime out of advocating anti-Semitism or of the Ku Klux Klan or any such incitement. Now, this outlaws any incitement to discrimination. The American law has always been, go ahead, you can say anything you want. You can only be held responsible for the results of such incitement.

In other words, that's why the American Civil Liberties Union always supports fascists and says, "Let them speak. The more we hear from them the better." The Soviets take the other line entirely, that incitement to inhuman discrimination should be made a crime.

Fry: You gave us the example of incitement for anti-Semitism. Did the Russians have a different policy on Jews at this time than right now when they're trying to give them a lot of misery?

Hogan: The Russian Constitution is very clear on all such matters.

Fry: Oh, it doesn't work out that way, is that what you mean?

Hogan: Yes.

Fry: The other little thing before you go on to Article 8--the "cruel and unusual punishment" is right now a pretty hot controversy here in this country because of the capital punishment issue before the courts. Did that come up in the discussion on that?

Hogan: Heavens, yes.

Fry: What did they say?

Hogan: That that's for their governments to decide, whether they'll do it that way or the other way. What they're against is cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment--degrading treatment or punishment is terribly important because you can have sentences that are degrading. Now, the right to life in Article 3, there was a great deal of discussion about that but they never came to any decision. "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person."

Fry: Yes, it says it right there.

Hogan: You can interpret that any way you want to, yes.

[Article 10] "Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him." That's straightforward.

"Article 11. Everyone charged with a penal offense has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defense." You can argue whether the Code Napoleon permits a person to be presumed innocent until proved guilty, according to law, in a public trial. The Code Napoleon doesn't give you that. This is why American citizens run into such difficulties in Latin American courts, because the Code Napoleon doesn't say you're innocent until you're proved guilty.

Fry: So that was also a subject of great argument?

Hogan: Yes, yes, the whole thing was. "No one shall be held guilty of any penal offense on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offense, under national or international law, at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time the penal offense was committed." That is, there should be no ex post facto legislation. We have that in our own Constitution.

"Article 12. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary"--now, note it's arbitrary--"interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation." That



Hogan: was forced in by the Latin Americans--"honor and reputation." They are very serious about that kind of thing. "Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks."

"Article 13. Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state." You can see why some countries abstained on that. "Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country." Many had to abstain too because many countries deny people the right to leave their country or the right to return. This would make exile illegal as a punishment, and banishment, meaning not being able to return. There's a special study done by the U.N. later on this subject.

"Everyone has the right to seek--" This one, Article 14, created terrible rows. The United States objected strongly to this one. "Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution." In other words, you are free to seek and, if granted, to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution, but this does not guarantee asylum. In other words, there is no right of asylum.

Fry: It's the right to seek.

Hogan: That's all, yes.

Fry: The United States was the one that had the "seek" phraseology put in?

Hogan: No. The U.S. wanted it to say, "Everyone has the right to asylum from persecution." You'll meet this in another form about freedom of information.

"This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations." This has to do really with war crimes.

"Article 15. Everyone has the right to a nationality." Now, here is where the United Nations has another treaty. It has to do with granting a United Nations passport comparable to the old Nansen passport of the League, allowing stateless persons, if there be any such, to enter their frontiers and leave.

The Americans have a view that no alien should be allowed to enter the United States who is not deportable. What the convention does, is to give a government the right to say, "We're not giving this fellow our nationality, but we will always permit him to return." Then he can enter the United States, for instance. Otherwise, we'd be stuck with people who were non-deportable. We also have under this whole issue covered in another convention under which, if people

Hogan: sign it, women cannot lose their nationality upon marriage unless they acquire the nationality of their husband, which isn't automatic in many countries. Also, it makes it illegal to deprive a woman of her nationality through divorce, because of divorce. There are cases where that could be true. She may become stateless by divorce.

"Article 16. Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality, or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution." That's equal rights.

"Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses." This is to get rid of child marriages and the purchase of brides.

Fry: Doesn't that also fly in the face of the Latin American countries and the legal status of the wife there?

Hogan: No, the legal status is another matter. This has only to do with marriage. They're entitled to equal rights as to marriage--in other words, equal freedom during marriage and its dissolution. This equalizes it. Now, it is true that in Latin America, women have no control over their children or their assets.

Fry: That article doesn't refer to that?

Hogan: No.

Fry: It referred to what? Only their right to marry or not to marry?

Hogan: Their freedom to marry, and equality in dissolution.

"Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses." That gets rid of child marriage. There was great effort to write in here a minimum age for marriage but they could get no agreement whatever on what that was, none. The world is just too different in all the different parts of it to get a fixed age.

Fry: What would seem a minimum age in the United States is really pretty old in India.

Hogan: Yes. Now the other thing that we did later in another convention is requiring the registration of marriages before a legal authority. Otherwise, people were apt to kick out a wife they didn't like.

Fry: How did India feel about this?

Hogan: Oh, oh, oh, oh. This was debated so thoroughly!

Fry: [Laughing] It sounds like it was just one big, long debate.

Hogan: [Article 17] "Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others." That legalizes the corporation. "No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property."

[Article 18] "Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief." Some people opposed that.

Fry: Why?

Hogan: If you come from a country such as many of the Moslem countries, proselytizing is illegal. "This right includes freedom to change... and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance." For instance, in Spain it used to be illegal (it may still be), and is in some Latin American countries, for Protestants to march in the street together.

[Article 19] "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference." Now, here is the catch--"and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers." That is impossible according to the Americans, because you can seek but you don't have to be given information. The Soviets object to "regardless of frontiers." They say that they have to and properly should black out the Voice of America because it's subversive.

[Article 20] "Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association." Well, try and do it. In many countries you do not have it. "No one may be compelled to belong to an association." That's the right-to-assembly amendment. In other words, you should be free for peaceful assembly and association but you can't be compelled to join.

Fry: What did "compel" mean?

Hogan: This is very hard to figure because the compulsions that a government or a trade union or a religion can put on you are very large. But this says, "No, stop it."

Fry: I should think that all your labor union people would really rise up about that one.

Hogan: In other words, those two sections of twenty are balanced. That's the idea.

[Article 21] "Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives."



Hogan: Everyone has the right of equal access to public services in his country." That is not true of people of certain castes in India, and in many places not true of women.

Fry: And not true in the Soviet Union if you're not a member of the Communist party.

Hogan: Or whatever, yes. "The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures." Of course, there are countries like Yeman and Saudi Arabia where nobody votes, so they had to abstain, or at least Saudi Arabia did; it was the only one then a member state. In South Africa that would be equally absurd.

Fry: In countries where elections simply were not held.

Hogan: That's right, yes.

[Article 22] "Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security"—remember that this is post-New Deal—"and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international cooperation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality." That's beautiful rhetoric.

[Article 23] "Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment." This is the balance thing again. In other words, you have the right to protection against unemployment. You have to see later the covenant on economic and social rights because there's a tremendous amount of disagreement among governments as to whether or not if you have the right to work do you have the right to a job. It's a very different question. That was why the charter says full employment and there are many governments that don't believe in full employment. Ours doesn't say. Ours says full employment is a good idea but, for instance, you have the right to work but not the right to a job necessarily, as you can see.

Fry: What do you mean a difference between a right to work and a right to a job?

Hogan: The Soviets say you have a right to a job. Full employment, yes. But if you have a job and work, you're lucky in this country. Or a lot of people are unlucky, that is, too.

Hogan: "Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work." That includes women.

Fry: That was another one that Minerva Bernardino--?

Hogan: Oh, yes. "Everyone who works has the right to just and favorable remuneration ensuring for himself"--I don't know how that got by, "himself"--"and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection." That means the New Deal kind of social legislation.

"Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests."

[Article 24] "Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

[Article 25] "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing, and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control." Whew--that's beautiful.

Fry: That's pretty sweeping.

Hogan: Now, I want to go back to Article 16, Section 3. "The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State." That created a great deal of difficulty. Many people feel that the family in the inclusive sense may be true, that it is the fundamental group, but it's an awfully wide unit as in China.

Fry: You're talking about communal units?

Hogan: Yes.

Fry: Why does this definition affect this number 3 of Article 16? No matter how you define family, they still agree that it's the natural and fundamental group unit of society entitled to protection. Right?

Hogan: Many people say that society comes prior to any individual or family.

Fry: As in China now.

Hogan: Yes. Now back to Article 25. "Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance." Some feminists object to that. "All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection." That isn't true. Much of the law concerning illegitimacy is barbaric.

Hogan: [Article 26] "Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available, and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit." Of course, that is ideal.

Fry: There certainly are a lot of countries that have a long way to go on that.

Hogan: Indeed. "Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

"Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children." This is something the Soviet Union naturally had to abstain on.

Fry: For a prior right to the government?

Hogan: [Article 27 (1)] They believe the government has the prior right, not the parents. "Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits."

Fry: So no untouchables?

Hogan: No untouchables. Patent rights cannot keep new medicines off the market.

Fry: The phrase "freely to participate in the cultural life of the community"--it seems like a lot of the Arab states would not go for that because of the role of the women.

Hogan: That's right, yes, sure. Saudi Arabia abstained.

[Article 27 (2)] "Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author." This leads the individual to have copyrights and patent rights.

Fry: As opposed to--

Hogan: The state. In the Soviet Union individuals don't have property rights.

Fry: But not the corporations or institutions?



Hogan: No. "Of which he is the author." Most people going to work for a corporation, doing scientific research, sign papers about that.

Fry: Giving it over to the corporation?

Hogan: That's right. "Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this declaration can be fully realized."

[Article 29] "Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible." You have duties to the community.

Fry: That's another new thing, isn't it?

Hogan: Yes. "In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society." They got almost everything they possibly could in there and, of course, there's a great deal of ambiguity in what different people mean by a democratic society.

Fry: And "the just requirements of morality?"

Hogan: That's right.

Fry: Does this get into obscenity?

Hogan: No, no. "These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations."

Fry: That was kind of a clincher there.

Hogan: Yes. [Article 30] "Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any state, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein." In other words, this says--

Fry: In case you left out anything.

Hogan: Yes, but it also makes it questionable whether the Ku Klux Klan is tolerable.

Fry: Should be tolerated?

Hogan: Should be tolerated, yes.

Fry: Or the Nazi party in the United States?

Hogan: That's right, yes. Now, it leaves out one whole great field with which the League was very much concerned and actively concerned, and that's minorities. That was deliberate. They could not then have gotten any agreement on passages about minorities. So the U.N. now has a sub-commission under the Commission of Human Rights that has been doing very active work in the field of prejudice and discrimination and minorities.

Fry: But we just talked about equality between races, sexes, all kinds of ways you can divide up people and get minorities and majorities.

Hogan: What about the protected minorities?

Fry: As in South Africa?

Hogan: Yes or in Rhodesia, or French Canada. You open a real box of worms.

Fry: In other words, you mean specifically then the problem of minorities that are "more equal" than the majority?

Hogan: That's one of the forms it takes, yes.

[end tape 4, side A; begin tape 4, side B]

Fry: Do you see anything now that should be different in the Declaration, in this year of 1977?

Hogan: I think that considering what it is, what its object is as to becoming a standard of achievement for nations, it's damned good. Yes. It's hard to pick fights with it. Also, it had to be kept simple, direct, or go on forever. That was your alternative. It does remain such that it can be put on one big sheet and put in public places.

Fry: Hung on a school wall.

Hogan: Yes.

Eleanor Roosevelt

Fry: I want to know what you think of Mrs. Roosevelt as a person who could develop strategies, because so many of the articles seem to be lifted straight from our own Constitution and Bill of Rights, the Declaration of Independence and other American documents.

- Hogan: Because, since the time of John Locke our country has been concerned about human rights. The English got rid of James II, Lockean ideas took over and we are still in the Lockean tradition.
- Fry: So you see this as a continuation of an intellectual tradition and not a tribute to Mrs. Roosevelt's ability to get things through?
- Hogan: She was brought up in the Lockean tradition.
- Fry: Yes, and had a marvelous schooling. But how was she operating in this context of the committee, dealing with the other people from such different governments and different cultures?
- Hogan: By stating our own American position unambiguously and repeatedly. For instance, some of the discussions about race: old Pavlov used to make very dirty cracks about southern discrimination against blacks. Remember, that we fought World War II with a segregated army and Harry Truman hadn't yet desegregated our armed forces, and she ran up against all sorts of attacks, not because she was a "nigger lover" but because this country still discriminated. I remember her saying very plaintively that the one cause of her adult life that she had spent most effort at was the elimination of racial discrimination and old Pavlov said loudly [imitates voice in guttural tone], "And where did you get?" Now, to see Eleanor, the "nigger lover" so-called in this country, and have a Russian shout that at her, it's pretty tough.
- Fry: Wasn't there an awful lot of cross-lobbying that went on at dinners and social functions, behind the scenes of all this?
- Hogan: There is in everything, yes. The World Council of Churches was fighting strongly. That thing about the family was very Catholic.
- Fry: Do you mean to imply the World Council of Churches was fighting that?
- Hogan: No, it was for it too. And there again on the public demonstration of your religion, some people don't like Salvation Army bands in the streets at night, no. The bishops may fight evangelicals. And in Moslem countries you don't demonstrate your religion publicly generally.
- Fry: What were the most sensitive areas that people got fired up on?
- Hogan: Everything. Every word in that--
- Fry: Was it religion?
- Hogan: It depends upon religion, Code Napoleon versus common law in constitutional countries such as ours. The women were always fighting something.



- Hogan: Oh, I mentioned one of the great ones, René Cassin, who was the highest judicial officer of France and later won the Nobel Prize for peace. Carlos Romulo was most active.
- Fry: Are you talking about the ones who advocated women's rights?
- Hogan: No, those were among the great leaders.
- Fry: Was this voted on article by article, or the whole thing?
- Hogan: In the Third Committee it was done article by article. In the General Assembly itself it went through with just the abstentions I mentioned.
- Fry: Am I correct in remembering that the United States did not abstain?
- Hogan: No, we voted for it. Harry Truman was still president in '48. In fact, he was re-elected in '48 to the great surprise of everybody, and in Paris at the Assembly everybody went around shaking the hands of every American, because if Harry had had the Europeans and the Latinos voting in his race against Dewey, they certainly all would have voted for Harry.
- Fry: Yes, this was December 10, right after the election in November, 1948.
- Hogan: Yes.
- Fry: Did your job include any conciliatory activities in trying to resolve some of the differences?
- Hogan: The only time we'd have any such thing is when you're working in a drafting committee, a small drafting committee.
- Fry: Did you have some of that?
- Hogan: Oh, sometimes. Mrs. Roosevelt used to stay up until about 3:00 a.m. Also, that winter was one of the worst--foggy, rainy, and there still weren't many taxis in '48 in Paris. You'd have a hell of a time getting home.
- One must remember that in 1948 Mrs. Roosevelt's prestige was unequalled, especially abroad. She was highly publicized for years as an idealist with a practical bent. She worked full time. Every lunch and dinner had a purpose and she was good company--a rare sense of humor. She was most persuasive.
- Fry: Did you have emergency places where people could sleep over?
- Hogan: When you're working, you work through, yes.

Fry: Where was this in Paris?

Hogan: Palais de Chaillot on the site of the old Place du Trocadéro, where they had built two big buildings before World War II.

Fry: This was voted on and passed in December. After that, as I understand it, it was a job of more formal treaty-making and covenant projects.

Hogan: For other subjects, for specific subjects. Like refugees.

Fry: Do you have any papers at all on those days?

Hogan: I'm not a pack rat, no.

Fry: It would be interesting to see some scraps from those drafts.

Hogan: Oh, Lord, they are all there. You can find them. Oh, yes, they are in the depository library. They're all here or in the building next door. Every damn one of them. Yes, we can sit down and look them over if you'd like.

Fry: That would be fascinating. You could remember a lot about that.

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## UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

### Preamble

Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,

Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law,

Whereas it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations,

Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote

social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

Whereas Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in co-operation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Whereas a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge,

Now, *Therefore*,

### THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY *proclaims*

THIS UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 10, 1948.

The rights embodied in the Declaration have been set forth in two covenants—the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights—which were adopted by the General Assembly on December 16, 1966.

Article 1. All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 2. Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

Article 3. Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

Article 4. No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

Article 5. No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 6. Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

Article 7. All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and

against any incitement to such discrimination.

Article 8. Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.

Article 9. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Article 10. Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

Article 11. (1) Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defence.

(2) No one shall be held guilty of any penal offence on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offence, under national or international law, at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time the penal offence was committed.

Article 12. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

Article 13. (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and



residence within the borders of each state.

(2) Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

Article 14. (1) Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.

(2) This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 15. (1) Everyone has the right to a nationality.

(2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

Article 16. (1) Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.

(2) Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.

(3) The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

Article 17. (1) Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.

(2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

Article 18. Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Article 19. Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Article 20. (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

(2) No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

Article 21. (1) Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.

(2) Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country.

(3) The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

Article 22. Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and interna-

tional co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

Article 23. (1) Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.

(2) Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.

(3) Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.

(4) Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

Article 24. Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

Article 25. (1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

(2) Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

Article 26. (1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

(2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

(3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

Article 27. (1) Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.

(2) Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

Article 28. Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.

Article 29. (1) Everyone has duties to the community in which alone his free and full development of his personality is possible.

(2) In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject

only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of ensuring the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society.

(3) These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to

the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 30. Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.

## UNITED NATIONS INFORMATION CENTRES AND SERVICES

[Countries not specified under "Services to" are covered by Headquarters]

ACCRA—United Nations Information Centre, Liberia and Maxwell Roads (Post Office Box 2339), Accra, Ghana.  
Services to: Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Sierra Leone.

ADDIS ABABA—United Nations Information Service, Economic Commission for Africa, Africa Hall (Post Office Box 3001), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.  
Services to: Ethiopia.

ALGER—United Nations Information Centre, 19 Avenue Claude Debussy (Post Office Box 803), Algiers, Algeria.  
Services to: Algeria.

ASUNCIÓN—United Nations Information Centre, Calle Coronel Bogado 871 (Post Office Box 1107), Asunción, Paraguay.  
Services to: Paraguay.

ATHENS—United Nations Information Centre, 36 Attalia Avenue, Athens 119, Greece.  
Services to: Cyprus, Greece, Israel, Turkey.

BAGHDAD—United Nations Information Centre, 27/12/1 Abu Nouwas Street, Bataween (Post Office Box 2048 Alwiyah), Baghdad, Iraq.  
Services to: Iraq.

BANGKOK—United Nations Information Service, Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East, Sala Santham, Bangkok, Thailand.  
Services to: Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, Thailand, Viet-Nam.

BEIRUT—United Nations Information Centre, United Nations Building, Bir Hassan (Post Office Box 4656), Beirut, Lebanon.  
Services to: Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Syria.

BELGRADE—United Nations Information Centre, Svetozara Markovica 58 (Post Office Box 157), Belgrade, Yugoslavia.  
Services to: Albania, Yugoslavia.

BOGOTÁ—United Nations Information Centre, Calle 19, No. 7-30, 7° Piso (Post Office Box 6567), Bogotá, Colombia.  
Services to: Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela.

BUENOS AIRES—United Nations Information Centre, Charcas 684, 3er Piso, Buenos Aires, Argentina.  
Services to: Argentina, Uruguay.

BUJUMBURA—United Nations Information Centre, Avenue de la Poste and Place Jungers (Post Office Box 1490), Bujumbura, Burundi.  
Services to: Burundi, Rwanda.



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## Obituaries

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### Charles A. Hogan

Charles A. Hogan, 74, a native of Oakland who worked for 25 years with the Secretariat of the United Nations in New York, died April 23 at Mount Zion Hospital in San Francisco after a long illness.

Dr. Hogan received bachelor's and doctoral degrees from the University of California at Berkeley. He later received an advanced degree from Oxford University in England. He taught philosophy at Berkeley for several years before leaving to become professor of international relations at Drew University in New Jersey.

During World War II Dr. Hogan worked with the American Embassy in London and the War Shipping Department. His term at the United Nations was marked by his rise to chief of sections on freedom of information and the press and non-governmental organizations. He also served as secretary of the economic and social council.

Dr. Hogan retired in 1968, and eventually returned to San Francisco where he has lived for the past seven years. He was one of the founders of the Northern California chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union and was active in the Democratic Party.

Dr. Hogan is survived by his wife, Betty B. Hogan of Nantucket, Mass., a son, Christopher, of Miami, Fla., and a grandson, Philip, also of Miami.

No services were held. Memorial contributions may be sent to the American Association for the United Nations, 300 E. 42nd. Street, New York City.

San Francisco Chronicle  
May 1, 1981



Regional Oral History Office  
The Bancroft Library

University of California  
Berkeley, California

Women in Politics Oral History Project

HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS PROJECT

Philip J. Noel-Baker

DISARMAMENT, THE UNITED NATIONS, AND HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS

An Interview Conducted by  
Amelia Fry  
in 1976

Underwritten by grants from:

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PHILIP NOEL-BAKER

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## INTERVIEW HISTORY

Time of Interview: July 18, 1976.

Place of Interview: The lakeside cottage in the Helen Gahagan and Melvyn Douglas compound at Fairlee, Vermont.

Those Present: Philip Noel-Baker and the interviewer.

## The Interview:

This interview, recorded with one of the western world's most thoughtful men in world affairs, breaks many of my own hallowed rules of oral history. It would not have occurred at all had not Helen Gahagan Douglas telephoned one summer morning to the University of Vermont where I was teaching. She herself lacked one more taping session, scheduled at the end of the month, for her memoir; in addition, countless screenings had produced a list of other persons to interview in a series about her. After agonizing evaluations and re-evaluations, the list had been trimmed down to fit the budget but still preserve a balance of viewpoint and periodicity. Nothing--almost nothing--could alter that list now.

But our conversation (reconstructed here from my notes) started with Helen's "Chita, Philip Noel-Baker is here!" I knew the list was back on the drawing boards. Philip Noel-Baker was not one of the chosen; after all, Philip Noel-Baker lived in London.

"He is just the one you need to fill in on my foreign affairs work and the U.N." Her voice, always dramatic, spilled over the telephone with excitement. I searched my memory for his link to Helen. "We were there together in 1946, you see," she was saying. "He in the British delegation, right next to the American. Get him to tell you the Molotov story. And ask him about Pandit. He'll remember Lyndon's speech, too--on civil rights--he and I reading it in the London paper together at that time." What sources did the University of Vermont library have on the U.N. committees, I wondered. And would I have time to dig them out?

"He knows all my views," she was saying. "He can evaluate the growth of my foreign policy views better than anyone else because he knows it--all through the years, don't you see. We've kept up our correspondence and visits. He will remember things that I don't. He came to the U.N. from all his experience in England--his father was in parliament and so was he, and he's been the foreign affairs officer of Labour governments." Another valuable, even exciting, source on Helen, I thought. But why should I dive

into an interview with little to go on except what the subject of the interview had imparted to me?

"Come over tomorrow morning and you can tape till lunch," Helen said.

Interview Philip Noel-Baker without prior research? There must be a way out. I needed time. "Let me call you back," I said. This was an opportunity better left untouched. Philip Noel-Baker was too significant a figure to be taped superficially.

But then--Helen had already asked him. How could I NOT tape him? He was there and ready and willing. Even if the interview crowded our series budget and couldn't be transcribed, at least we could deposit the tape, and I would have had a fascinating day with interesting people.

"Is Charles Morrissey teaching with you?" Helen was asking. I told her he was.

"Good. Bring Charlie and you can swim afterwards. He can drive you over here." Of course. Charlie. Helen had suggested a compromise that might save the interview from disaster.

"Maybe Charlie and I can interview him together," I suggested. "He's interviewed for the Truman Library; maybe he would be familiar with the foreign policy questions and United Nations in 1946."

Helen was triumphant. "That's perfect. Come by 10:00 if you can, and we'll all have coffee and toast first."

Nine o'clock the next morning found me reading aloud in the front seat as Morrissey herded his Dodge through the myriad of small Vermont villages to the other side of the state. The car had been hastily equipped with coffee, swim suits, books on the U.N., and Philip Noel-Baker's The Arms Race, a Programme for World Disarmament.<sup>\*</sup> Helen met us on the broad veranda that circled the house and curved with the peninsula on Lake Morey. Even though fighting a cold, she was radiant, wearing one of her typical bright, primary colors, this time a yellow cotton from Mexico. We gathered in the spacious farm-type kitchen and met the Rt. Hon. Noel-Baker. Our get-acquainted conversation went something like the following:

Philip Noel-Baker to me: "You sit here," indicating the chair to his right. I sat. Over jams and toast I suggested that the taped interview would focus largely on Helen's role as an alternate on the U.S. delegation during the second part of the First Session of the United Nations, held in New York.

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<sup>\*</sup>London, J. Calder; New York, Oceana Publications, 1960, c1958.



"Philip dear, you must be quite candid," Helen interjected over her shoulder at the cook stove. "This is for history, you know." She laughed. "You can say anything. I intend to go upstairs and take a nap while you are recording."

"And Mr. Morrissey can join us because he is a student of Truman's foreign policy," I added.

Philip Noel-Baker quietly surveyed the scene. So did I. To judge from the scenery of our drive across the state, he was the only person in Vermont that morning dressed in a starched white collar and gleaming patent leather shoes. Quietly, he addressed us all. "I think I shall be interviewed only by Mrs. Fry," he said. I explained politely that Charlie and I had already planned the interview as a cooperative production. He would get a much better interview that way.

"I work better with one person," he stated, smiling politely. "I also prefer to work with the female sex." He was not negotiating; he was stating two verities as simply as possible. I shot a glance at Helen, who after all had perpetrated this project, but she only confirmed his convictions with a grin. Morrissey was grinning, too, but for a different reason; he was relishing the idea of my having to handle foreign policy myself--while he swam in the lake.

Philip Noel-Baker looked at me and smiled. This man had a tranquility that was unsettling. It was as if our Irishness--Helen's, Charlie's, mine--with its robust gestures and lively talk, had been passed down through the generations so that on this day it could seem excessive, verging on the absurd in contrast to our British friend. His voice was low but distinct with precise diction. Any gesture was small and purposeful; otherwise the hand was in his lap. He had such a strong presence that as he talked it was easy to envision the sweep of the General Assembly arching around him, overlaying the kitchen range and cupboards. However, under his reserve, under the perfection of his diction, was something more, a Philip Noel-Baker essence of sorts. It was communicated through a twinkle in his steady, bright eyes, as though whatever he said might have further meaning and his private game was to see who could catch it. A two-level conversation! Delightful in social interchange, but perhaps ambiguous in an audio-taped interview.

Helen arranged a small table and chairs in the sunroom, overlooking the lake, then, true to her word, disappeared upstairs. We turned on the recorder, and with my first query his story was off and running with a quick bow to his forebears, a retrospective glance at his career, and then to the United Nations and Helen. There he slowed, certain of the interviewer's interest and smiling at the memories. It had been a time of hope, this First Session. A great war had ended, and global issues like disarmament, control of atomic energy, or the communist nations could still be served



palatably with the lunches and dinners that Helen and Philip enjoyed. Helen's own work was in the "Conference on International Organizations," and she was listed in the U.N. Roster of Delegates as an alternate with John Foster Dulles and Adlai E. Stevenson. But those points from my small research notes were irrelevant to the pictures of the special Anglo-American alliance that were turning in Philip Noel-Baker's mind. He and Helen: how their styles must have contrasted! Helen, always an advocate, splashing her brilliance, her beauty, and her high energies through the chambers at Lake Success. And Noel-Baker, eloquent, self-contained, pleasant—the prototype personality for a diplomat. As we talked of 1946, I looked at him. The only difference that more than three decades must have made in his appearance was a physical frailty, but even that cancelled out as illusion in the face of the athletic achievement of that day's travel and work schedule: lunch, pack, then a three o'clock plane for yet another task.

Perfect sentences in logical sequence flowed as though he were reading a print out in his mind, even when articulating his dearest hopes of peace and disarmament. Occasionally he made a small gesture to emphasize a point. Perhaps he was organizing his thoughts with the same method he used for his debates at the United Nations. After the first few minutes it was clear that my questions were not going to matter much, that he knew what he wanted to say and would say it, lucidly but at times with that enigmatic twinkle. He even ended his commentary right on the dot of lunchtime, and with a literary finesse that was worthy of a Hemingway.

The only distractions were the on-going squeak of his patent leather shoes against the table leg, of which he was unaware, and the startling appearance of Morrissey, silently serving us coffee as a mock butler. (I shall drown him at 3:05, I thought.)

Lunch over, Noel-Baker was rushed to the local airport to grab a plane to New York. The birches and maples were still, the sun was glinting on the lake, and I had a tape to prove our Vermont rendezvous was a fact.

Should the tape be transcribed? We had not captured much of the complexity of his theory of peace and international politics; Morrissey's questions had not gotten asked. Nor had we produced an autobiography deserving of this historically significant man. We had, however, taped a shimmering wedge of history that fitted each of two persons into the life of the other and into the history of the world in that small slice of time. That was all we could do, and it was sufficient within the confines of the larger assignment.

The tape was squeezed into the series for transcribing at the Regional Oral History Office, then corrected—although it required few of those changes that are usually made to eliminate ambiguities arising from the conversion of oral English to written. However, a couple of names were unclear, and the source and context of a few allusions needed clarification. And therein lay a difficulty. He was in London, with failing eyesight, and

could not afford sufficient time from his secretary for any work other than on his present book manuscript. Through Helen, we received the correct names of his two friends who were killed in World War I, but some ambiguities remained.

The problem was solved when a vacation in Europe allowed me to go to London and review with him the questionable spots in the manuscript in his home on September 30 of that year. He and the late Lord Robert Cecil had lived in the square white house for years. One of several houses, all in a row, all owned by the Duke of Westminster on South Eaton Place, its significance was to be honored in a state ceremony a month later. A permanent plaque would state that its occupant, Lord Cecil, was a founder of the League of Nations. The entry porch was small, square, and white-pillared behind a black iron picket fence. His secretary ushered me in past an antique trunk in the hallway, past a stairway, and into the front parlor. For reasons I could not define, probably something in my western U.S. vision, the room seemed somewhat bare although it must have been arranged that way for years. The pale London daylight came in through recessed windows facing South Eaton Place. A Persian rug spilled its coral, cream, and dark blue hues over the wood floor. In the center of the room was a dark, rectangular table where we worked. A tall secretary with book shelves was on one wall; opposite it was a coal fireplace beside which sat a more manageable electric heater. The partition at the far end of the room was graced with five photographs, with the portrait of a boy dominating. On the other side of the partition his secretary, his "angel" as he called her, was working on the last touches of his latest book so that it could be finished before he flew to Sweden the following Monday.

He and his secretary brought in tea and cookies. I read several pages of the transcript to him, adding a clarifying phrase here and there to the few problem passages. That done, we had more tea as he talked about his book, about the network of blockages to disarmament, about the current American elections and his hopes for Jimmy Carter's chance to win, about the causes of the current crisis in the value of the British pound. He asked my help, when I returned to the States, in looking up an item or two for him in our library for an article he was planning. I asked if he intended to write an autobiography. He described boxes upon boxes of papers stacked away, and said his secretary also wished he would go through to begin work on his memoirs. But there was a shrug in his voice, which meant disarmament issues claimed a higher priority use of his secretary's time, his dwindling vision, and his pen. He had made a point in the interview about those events which could have happened in history but didn't, the "if's" of history. His own life history, told in his impeccable English, would probably be one of those "if's" that would never take place. We both knew it.

He stood in the hallway as I left, a small wiry man who seemed so alone, who still had so much to do, who was so persistent in his mission, who so sincerely invited me back. I wanted to return, to go through those boxes and finish our interview.

Amelia R. Fry  
Interviewer-Editor

11 November 1978  
Regional Oral History Office  
486 The Bancroft Library  
University of California at Berkeley



## XII DISARMAMENT, THE UNITED NATIONS, AND HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS

[Interview 1: July 18, 1976]

[begin tape 1, side A]

High Points of His Life

## Background and Family

- Fry: What I would like to do first is to find out just briefly what you consider the high points of your career, so we can have an introduction here of yourself. Your name has been in my consciousness ever since I became aware there was such a thing as American-British relations. [Laughter] We'll also put your vitae in the transcript.
- Noel-Baker: Do I start?
- Fry: Yes!
- Noel-Baker: The high point of my life was on the first of November, 1889, when I was born. My great-great grandfathers--everybody has two grandfathers, four great-grandfathers, eight great-great grandfathers--two of my great-great grandfathers fought in the American War of Independence, one on each side. [Laughs] The one who fought for King George made off for Canada as a United Empire loyalist. He took with him a fourteen-year-old son.

When they got very near the Canadian border, they were caught by a party of American troops who took my great-great grandfather and strung him up to a tree and left him for dead. The family legend says that they were very, very drunk. Their hanging technique was not good. They never even noticed that the boy was there. He hid behind the bush, and when they'd gone, he climbed the tree and cut his father down. That is why I am

Noel-Baker: here today. He reached Canada and met up with a great-great grandfather who came from the south of Ireland to Kingston, Ontario, in 1819.

In due course, my father was born in a log cabin on the northern shore of Lake Ontario in 1851. Naturally, the tradition of the family was not very warm towards the United States. They were United Empire loyalists.

After my father came back to England and established an engineering business, he entered politics and was a member of the London county council, and then of the House of Commons. He devoted himself to peace work, to the prevention of the First World War. He became convinced that the essential factor in preserving the peace of the world could be--and should be--British-American cooperation.

It was within that purpose and that tradition that I was born, educated, and trained. To that end, my father sent me to do a first freshman year at Haverford College, Pennsylvania. He sent me afterwards to the Sorbonne in Paris to learn about the French and to talk French.

After I had been to Cambridge University for four years in England, he sent me to Germany to find out about the Germans and to learn to talk German. I made many close German friends. Within twelve months of the time I left Germany, the military in Germany had defeated those who wanted to prevent the war. They were very powerful people. My father believed that they included the Kaiser himself, but the Kaiser, if he was against the war, was overborne by the general staff. The war began.

#### Organization of an Ambulance Unit, World War I

Noel-Baker: The second high point of my life was when, on the fifth of August, 1914, one day after the war with Germany began, I wrote a letter to the weekly organ of the Society of Friends--the Quakers--and proposed that those who did not want to fight in the war should form an ambulance to go to the front, and see, in so far as they might, the hardships and the dangers of the soldiers.

I did that because all my friends from Cambridge--all the athletes and scholars and wonderful people with whom I had been consorting for four, five, six years--were all rushing into the army, going into the regiments that were sent first to the front.

Noel-Baker: About half of my intimate Cambridge friends were killed within twelve months of the beginning of the war. Some of my closest friends--one from All Souls, Oxford, Twiggy [G.R.L.] Anderson, a high hurdler; one from Cambridge, Kenneth Powell\*--were killed before Christmas, 1914.

From that moment onwards, having seen what trench warfare was like, having lived in the bombarded city of Ifre, having seen Ifre from being a beautiful Belgian city with a lovely clock hall, and a happy civil population, having seen it destroyed, reduced to nothing, I was determined that whatever else I did in life, I would carry on what my father had tried to do and work to get rid of war and armaments and the militarism from which war and armaments begin. I think it is the most poisonous influence in human affairs.

To the League of Nations and the British Foreign Office

Noel-Baker: The third high point in my life came again very soon. Again, it was arranged by my father. Before the war was over, in the year 1918, he arranged it with his Conservative friend, Lord Robert Cecil, the son of our most aristocratic family in Britain, the Salisburys. He was the son of a man who had been three times prime minister of Britain, Lord Robert Cecil.

My father arranged with his friend Lord Robert Cecil that when the war was over, I should come back immediately and work for Robert Cecil in the Foreign Office of the League of Nations. He was able to persuade Lord Robert Cecil that I was the man he wanted because in Cambridge I had done well in economics and international law. Robert Cecil, who did not entirely trust the bureaucracy of Britain, even the Foreign Office officials who were his good friends as they were my good friends, was very glad to have somebody who was not a bureaucrat, who was from outside the public administration but who he was certain was entirely devoted to the purposes and the objectives of the League of Nations, and to the removal of armaments and the military from the international life of the world.

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\* Philip Noel-Baker adds: Fifth in high hurdles in Olympic finals at Stockholm in 1912.



Noel-Baker: And so it happens that on the thirtieth of November I was still in Italy at the front, and on the first of January--four and a half weeks later--I was in Paris in the British delegation with Robert Cecil. One of the secretaries of the commission which wrote the covenant of the League of Nations was sitting night after night in the first floor of Hotel de Crillon, on the corner of the hotel which faces the Rue Boissy d'Anglais. With Woodrow Wilson in the chair, with Smuts and Robert Cecil as representatives of the British Empire and my particular master, with [Sofoklis] Venizelos from Greece, with Leon Bourgeois, an ex-prime minister of France, with prime ministers and foreign secretaries all 'round the table, there was never such a collection of eminent men in one room before or since.

From that moment until today, I have worked for the League of Nations, for the United Nations, for the policy of disarmament which is the very foundation of the covenant which was drafted in Paris and of the charter which was drafted in San Francisco twenty-five years later.

Fry: Could you also just run down what posts you held in the Labor government?

Noel-Baker: Too late--much too late--in 1929, ten years after the peace conference in Paris, I became a member of the House of Commons. If I'd been a member in 1922, or 1924, when there were general elections, it would have been a great deal better for me and my political career. I was elected in 1929.

I became the Parliamentary private secretary to a great Labor foreign minister--foreign secretary--Arthur Henderson. I served with him throughout his term as foreign minister, which lasted for two and a quarter years. Afterwards, I served with him as his personal assistant when he was president of the disarmament conference in Geneva, organized by the League of Nations in 1932.

The Ifs of the Disarmament Conference at the League of Nations, 1932

The Effect of Ramsay McDonald's National Coalition

Noel-Baker: Alas, Henderson was no longer foreign secretary. As a result, Robert Cecil was no longer the delegate for disarmament to the conference. If those two men had been there, it is my intimate conviction that the conference would have succeeded. If they had been in office, if Robert Cecil had been on the floor and Henderson, as president, had been foreign secretary, I believe the disarmament conference of 1932 would infallibly have succeeded. When President Hoover, on behalf of the United States, put forward a plan for drastic disarmament by land and sea and air, founded on principles which Robert Cecil had enunciated on the opening day of the conference, the conference failed.

Fry: That's one of those things that did not happen in history that should have.

Noel-Baker: I consider--and I'm sure that you and your colleagues don't agree with this view--I think that the ifs of history are a great deal more important than what happened, because when you look at the ifs of history, you see how human history could have turned for good instead of evil, if only something had happened which quite easily could have happened.

If our Labour prime minister Ramsay MacDonald had held on in the Labour government for another six months, instead of breaking it up and making a national coalition of all parties in which the worst elements of the Tory party dominated--I am sure he could have held on for those six months. If he had, then Arthur Henderson would have been foreign secretary, and Robert Cecil would have been our delegate.

When Hoover's proposal came up in six months after the conference began, in June of 1932, if the British government--then the most powerful military and naval nation in every continent of the world--had thrown itself behind the Hoover plan, it could not have failed!

Fry: It would have had to have been put into effect.

Noel-Baker: We should have had disarmament. We very nearly got it as it was. The militarists in Britain--particularly in Britain, but also in all other countries--had to work like fiends. They had to lie

Noel-Baker: and deceive the people. They had to falsify the facts. They had to delay the operations. They had to demand consideration in the British cabinet, which they should never have had--and in the end, which they lost, but only too late. If they had been properly opposed by men in power--Henderson and Cecil--the United States proposals would have gained such momentum that the treaty would certainly have been made.

#### The Fascist Governments

Noel-Baker: Hoover's plan was accepted, to everybody's amazement, by Fascist Italy. [Dino] Grandi, the foreign minister, learned English especially to make a speech in English accepting point-by-point everything that Hoover proposed. Grandi received the ovation of his life in the conference when he sat down! It was accepted by the Weimar Republic of Germany. Thirteen years later, after the war was over, in Cologne in 1955, Chancellor Bruening told me that after he had come to Geneva and gone back to Germany, he was convinced that the whole thing was settled, that the treaty was being made. He never understood what had happened to delay its preparation and signature.

#### Soviet Russia

Noel-Baker: It was accepted by Soviet Russia, Litvinoff, of whom Helen has a harsh memory, but with whom I worked for many years, and whom Robert Cecil described in a book as a sound colleague. The Hoover plan was accepted by Litvinoff on behalf of Soviet Russia. He said, in essence, "This is not the general and complete disarmament which I, as Soviet delegate, have proposed, and in which my government believes, but it is a long first step towards it. If we make these first steps that Hoover proposes, it will be so immensely plain to every nation in the world that the policy of reducing and getting rid of armaments is right, that inevitably we shall make a second and a third stage, and finish the job. Soviet Russia accepts this first plan put forward by Hoover as a preliminary step."

The plan was accepted by all the commonwealth countries. It was accepted by the Scandinavians. It was accepted by all the middle and smaller powers.



### Japan Opposing

Noel-Baker: There were only France and Japan standing out. Japan was in the hands of a militarist government, and was attacking Manchuria. France was simply following London. Again, if Henderson and Robert Cecil had been our delegates, the French would have infallibly gone with them.

### On-Site Inspection Clause

Noel-Baker: Three months later, a great Frenchman called [Joseph Paul-] Boncour proposed a French plan for disarmament, which went virtually all the way towards complete disarmament, with no guarantee for the security which they were always talking about, except the right of inspection on the ground. General Georges of the French general staff, who was by far the ablest man who came to Geneva from the French military, declared in the conference that inspection is security. If they got a treaty with the inspection clauses (which were for inspection on the site, on the ground) then there would be League on-site control by a permanent League inspector, which Litvinoff had been the first to propose. General Georges said that if the nations got permanent on-site inspections, that was security, and no one would be able to cheat and break the treaty. [Laughs] I'm going on too long. I'm sorry!

### Germany and Hitler

Fry: Before we go on to your association with Helen Douglas, I do have one other question to ask you about this, because this is so fascinating. Do you think that if this treaty had been passed, Germany under Hitler would not have become the aggressor that it did?

Noel-Baker: You have answered your own question with an assumption which I dispute.

Fry: All right.

Noel-Baker: You said "Germany with Hitler." A lot of our people thought--including our major general who had spent ten years in Geneva and who knew the whole thing--if it had been made on a British afterthought, a too-late proposal, in March of 1933, when Hitler had been already chancellor for two months, Hitler would have

Noel-Baker: been destroyed. He would not have been able to establish his power. Consider if the treaty had been made in June of 1932, or if it had been made on Paul-Boncour's proposal in October of 1932, Hitler would never have come to power.

They would never have been able to do the unconstitutional deception of the German people by which he was made chancellor, by traitors of the German establishment. I knew Germany very well in those days. I spent the year of 1913 in Germany. I'd known trade union leaders, I'd known Socialists, I'd known a lot of the people who mattered. I was a good deal in Germany in the 1920s, and saw a lot of their leaders. I was in very close touch with the Germans in the League of Nations secretariat. I used to ski with them on Sundays. I was in touch with the politicians who came down to the disarmament conference. It is my absolute conviction that if a treaty had been made on the Hoover plan in June of '32, or on Boncour's plan in October of '32, Hitler would never have come to power.

There was an election. They had a general election about every three or four months in Germany at that time, as you know. In December of '32, they had an election in which Hitler lost two million votes because the German people thought that out of the Hoover-Boncour proposals, a disarmament treaty was sure to come. The only issue in German politics at that time was fulfillment of the Treaty of Versailles--or non-fulfillment--tearing up the Treaty of Versailles as Hitler wanted to, or making a disarmament treaty, which the West had promised to Germany, part five of the Treaty of Versailles.

Every German I knew was agreed that if we made the treaty, if the other nations made a substantial disarmament--not necessarily down to the German level, but a long way towards it--then Hitler would not have come to power. I believe that the right time to have defeated Hitler was in the year 1932, in Geneva at that conference. Does that answer your question?

Fry: Yes. I wish we could pursue this.

The United Nations and Helen Gahagan Douglas

The First General Assembly

Fry: Here on the cover of your book, put out by Atlantic Books, named The Arms Race: A Program for World Disarmament, which I believe came out in 1958, it mentions that during World War II you served in the coalition government as parliamentary secretary to the ministry of war transport, and then in '45 you were a member of the first British delegation to the United Nations.

Noel-Baker: Yes.

Fry: Is that where you met Helen?

Noel-Baker: That was when I met Helen.

Fry: Could you please tell us about that?

Noel-Baker: Yes, I can. I was minister of state--the only minister of state in the Foreign Office. Ernest Bevin was the secretary of state. Nowadays they have five ministers of state. I had to do everything that Ernest Bevin didn't do, and when he went away for two months, as he sometimes did, to Moscow or Washington or wherever, I had to answer in the House of Commons for the Foreign Office and attend the cabinet to deal with foreign affairs.

I came with the men and women whom I'd proposed to Ernest Bevin as our delegation to the second half of the First General Assembly of the United Nations in New York (the plenary sessions being held at La Guardia, and the committees and other work being done at Lake Success).

On the opening day of the Assembly with the Belgian foreign minister Paul Henri Spaak as president, the United States delegation and the United Kingdom delegation, the seats being arranged in alphabetical order, were side-by-side in the front row of the floor of the General Assembly.

Sitting next to me was John Foster Dulles, and next to him Senator Arthur Vandenberg, and next to him Senator Warren Austin, who was the leader of the U.S. delegation, and next to Senator Austin, Helen Gahagan Douglas. I did not know her. I did not know who she was, so ignorant and ill-informed a Britisher was I. I looked along the bench, past the men, and I saw this lovely young woman.



Noel-Baker: When we rose after the morning session, which seemed to me extremely long and extremely boring [laughter], I worked my way past John Foster Dulles, past Senator Vandenberg, past Senator Austin, and I said to Mrs. Douglas, "May I introduce myself? We may have to work together." So we shook hands, and she told me her name, and I then remembered that she was among the acquaintances of my great friend Louis Dolivet of France, who was in New York at that time, and editing his very remarkable journal, United Nations World.

I went straight from the assembly hall to a telephone, and I rang up Louis Dolivet, and I said, "Louis, you have to ask me to dinner with Mrs. Helen Gahagan Douglas."

He said, "Sure. What night would suit? Thursday? Friday? Saturday?"

I said, "Not Thursday, Friday, Saturday. Tonight!"

So Louis said, "Okay, I'll try," and sure enough, we met for dinner. When dinner was over, I said to Mrs. Gahagan Douglas, "What about me driving you home in a taxi?" She said yes. As we got near the Plaza--we were dining uptown somewhere--when we got near the Plaza Hotel, I said, "What about stopping here and dancing for a little while?"

She said, "Well, I have a delegation meeting early tomorrow."

I said, "Yes, I have one at nine o'clock, but that doesn't mean we can't go and dance now." So after a little argument, I beat down her feminine resistance.

We stopped at the Plaza Hotel and we danced for two or three hours. As soon as we sat down, I said, "Look, I ought to understand. Supposing you tell me the story of your life?"

So she proceeded to tell me the story of her life, and how she got into politics and why she was there. From that day, we worked rather closely together.

The Economic and Social Commission

[end tape 1, side A; begin tape 1, side B]

Noel-Baker: It so happened that we were in the Economic and Social Commission. We sat next to each other. I was able to ask her about everything. There came a big debate about UNRRA, to which I had been the British delegate from the beginning until it was wound up. I was going to make a speech, so I did the kind of thing that we always do in the House of Commons. I listened to everybody else and made notes on separate pieces of paper of what they said, and began to fit the pieces of paper together into an order that would make a speech. Helen thought it was going to be another disaster, because she was used to speeches that were written out and typed on sheets of paper and all came in proper order. [Laughs]

Ah, but my speech came out like a House of Commons speech, which was all right (though I in fact regret what I then said). It sounded all right, and it went down well in the commission. Helen was amazed. So I said, "What about going to lunch?" After that, Helen and I lunched together every day.

When the committee proceedings were finished at five or six or seven o'clock in the evening, I drove her back to New York, to her hotel. Gradually we found that on every aspect of foreign policy--on armaments, on militarism, on economic cooperation, on help to the poorer nations, on international disputes, on the international court, on the proper use of the Security Council and the Assembly--we were in complete agreement. Our minds always clicked together. If Helen said something, it was as though I'd said it myself. If I'd said something, in nine cases out of ten, she agreed with what I said.

That made a community of thinking which I think was really useful to us both--certainly immensely useful to me.

Throughout those long weeks of the Assembly, I really never thought of anything except of being with Helen. I had to go to a delegation meeting every morning at nine o'clock and take the chair in the delegation. Ernest Bevin was sitting in the grotesquely absurd body they call the Council of Foreign Ministers, which wasn't a council at all. This was just a gathering of Ernest Bevin and Molotov and the Frenchman and the GMC man [General Motors Corporation Edward R. Stettinius] who was secretary of state before [James F.] Byrnes. They met together in some private room, quarrelled from morning until night, and never did a stroke of useful business. This meant that I had to act as the leader of the British delegation. I had to be in the



Noel-Baker: chair of the delegation meeting at nine o'clock, three or four times a week. We had a meeting with the Commonwealth delegation, with the Canadians and the New Zealanders. We had the Australians, the Irish when they came, the South Africans--Smuts, who was there himself.

But all the time, I was only waiting for the moment when I got the opportunity to begin talking to Helen and being with her again. That went on through the evening almost every day. Whenever I could, I got her not only for lunch, but for dinner as well. [Laughs] You may draw your own conclusion, whatever you think right.

#### Views of Litvinoff

Fry: That's very vivid. I would like to know where you found any disagreement with Helen at the beginning and her evolution into this pattern of agreement with you.

Noel-Baker: I don't believe I ever did find myself in disagreement with Helen. We both thought the Russian Communists were very tiresome from time to time. I was more inclined to be indulgent to Maxim Litvinoff, who came at the beginning.\* He quickly disappeared from the scene. I never understood why, but for some reason he lost favor in Moscow and was withdrawn. I was always convinced that Litvinoff's heart was sound, whatever he said. He wanted the right thing. He wanted the United Nations to succeed. He wanted to have drastic disarmament as quickly as it could possibly be got.

But of course, neither Helen nor I quite fully understood why Litvinoff was in a nervous condition, and was very bitterly opposed to the policies of the United States at that time. Later we came to see that it was because of the Oppenheimer-Lilienthal plan (always known as the Baruch plan) for the control and the abolition of the nuclear weapon and the control of nuclear energies. The Russians believed that Oppenheimer's conception of an international authority under the United Nations--which would work on everything to do with nuclear energy, including the mining of uranium, including the plants in which uranium was processed and prepared for use in peaceful reactors or as weapons--

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\* Appointed Soviet Union Minister of Foreign Affairs March 23, 1946.  
Released from office August 24, 1946.



Noel-Baker: Litvinoff believed, as all Russians believed, that that plan was an international corporation to run everything to do with the nuclear industry, that it was a plan to deprive Russia of a nuclear industry of its own. They used very often to say, both in public and in private to me, that Russia needed nuclear energy far more than any other country in the world. They had less fossil fuel, less oil and coal. They had a greater need for major industrialization. They couldn't raise the standards of living of their people unless they built up all kinds of light and heavy industry in Russia. Nuclear power was essential for this development.

#### Views on Distribution of Energy Resources

Noel-Baker: There are great engineers now, including Mr. Buckminster Fuller, who think that every nation, not only the Soviet nation but the British and the American and all the others, rich and poor, could have a higher energy income per capita than any nation now possesses and could have it within ten years--without the use of any fossil fuel, without the use of nuclear power at all, by using the winds, the tides, and the rivers and the sunshine.

I heard Buckminster Fuller expound this in UNESCO three weeks ago with immense eloquence and conviction. He said that the condition of achieving a higher standard of living for every human being, including all the hungry, starving nations of the world and the highest energy income for every people, was the division of the three hundred thousand million dollars now used for world armaments, and putting it to work on economic production of food, on everything to do with nutrition, on the provision of power for industry and for the home, without fossil fuels or nuclear energy.

Fry: That's another one of those ifs that is going on in present history, isn't it?

Noel-Baker: This is an if that is still before us.

We could carry it out today, if we made the right decision. That's why Helen and I think now that the prominent issue in world affairs--the dominant issue in human life, and in the survival of the human race--is whether we can defeat the militarists and divert this enormous volume of resources from preparation for war to preparation for a good life for all of the nations. We believe that if the right statesman came to power, and if the people could be made to see that it lies in their hands to choose

Noel-Baker: peace instead of oblivion, instead of the extermination of humanity, it could all happen very, very quickly!

What is needed is a revolution of thinking, and it is for that that Helen worked herself to death, and for which I go on beavering away in my stubborn, uninteresting way in London.

Fry: In your so-called "retirement," but you haven't retired!  
[Laughter]

Noel-Baker: No, I never retired, because I said to my constituents when I left Parliament, "I shall not retire. I shall go on doing what I at least call 'public work,' because those who've retired and do nothing very quickly find themselves in their coffins underground. I prefer to stay above ground for as long as I can."  
[Laughs]

#### Assessment of Helen Gahagan Douglas

Fry: You came to the United Nations as probably one of the best-informed people there, in foreign policy and world affairs. I wonder if you can remember your assessment, at the time, of how much Helen brought to her delegation in the United Nations. She was on the Foreign Relations Committee in the House of the United States Congress at the time. Could you give us some benefit of your remembrance of how well informed Helen was, or what her major areas of education had been in foreign affairs?

Noel-Baker: When she had had her scintillating career on the stage, she had announced to Melvyn one morning at breakfast that she was going into opera. He had said to her, "My good girl, you don't go into opera. You're taken when you're eight or ten or twelve, and you're prepared to breathe. You aren't even allowed to sing a note until you're fifteen or sixteen. Then they start training your voice. It's an absurdity for you to say you're going into opera."

She said, "Well, okay. It's all settled. I've got my Russian teacher. I'm going to Dresden." And sure enough, in two years she was prima donna in Bavaria. In 1937, she was chosen prima donna for one of the great opera houses in the world--in Vienna. She rehearsed the full range of the operas that they were going to do in the season of 1938, and as they came nearer to the opening night, Helen began to feel the Nazis closing in.

Then she saw that Hitler had come to power. Of course, as



Noel-Baker: I said, the disarmament conference of 1932 had been allowed to fail. Mussolini had turned to militarism and empire, because Grandi's support--his foreign minister's support--for disarmament had been defeated. Grandi was discredited because the conference of 1932 was allowed to fail. All the liberal elements in the vastly strong military powers of Germany and Italy were turned to the dictatorship and the suppression of the liberties of other nations.

She thought it was the end of democracy; perhaps another world war, and she threw up her opera work and came home to the United States, and started working for the refugees from Hitler. That was the decisive moment of her life, the ending of what would have been an epic operatic career, in which she would have become one of the greatest sopranos that the opera has ever known in any country, and in which she became instead an absolutely brilliant woman politician with a tremendous role to play in asserting women's rights and women's power in the public life of the nations of the world, and in working for civilized foreign policy.

I think her first and dominating concern was that Nazism should not triumph, that government by violence and by torture and by the destruction of democratic institutions should not be allowed to triumph. So she stood foursquare behind the Allied effort to defeat Hitler until, in fact, victory was won.

I think that Helen felt as I felt, that the supreme purpose of the United Nations was to get rid of foreign policy by armed force, and insure that the relations between nations were founded instead on the rule of law; that the charter was the basic constitutional law of mankind; that it ought to have, for every nation, what Jimmy Carter called on Thursday night, "the majesty of the Constitution."\*

The charter should have, in international affairs, the same majesty, the same dominating, irresistible power that the United States Constitution has--or ought to have--and has mostly had, except under Nixon, in the United States.

Fry: Now this was the second session, is that right, in which you and Helen worked?

Noel-Baker: It was the second half of the first session.

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\* The Carter-Ford presidential campaign of 1976.



Fry: Oh, I see.

Noel-Baker: In order to highlight the part which Britain had played in the resistance to Hitler during the first two years when we were virtually alone, with our allies being defeated France and defeated Norway and defeated Denmark and defeated Belgium and Holland--[laughs]--in order to highlight what the British people had done, they had put the first half of the in London. I was the minister responsible for organizing the material and arrangements for the session. In fact, I was responsible for getting Paul Henri Spaak elected as president. He was a brilliant, wonderful president--but afterwards, a very erratic and uncertain statesman. He was not always on the right side.

The second half, it was agreed, should be held in New York. So we sat for six weeks in London, and then adjourned until the end of September, and met again at LaGuardia in the fall of 1946.

Fry: That's where you met Helen, at that point. What I'm trying to ask you next is an effort to find out what your close relationship--yours and Helen's deep affection for each other--actually contributed to this bit of history of the United Nations. How did it function on the floor, in your work in the plenary sessions, and in the way you voted?

Noel-Baker: Unfortunately, we both dropped out of the active participation in the institution of the United Nations. Helen was congresswoman in 1944. She was reelected in 1946 while the Assembly was going on. I'm sure you got this from lots of other people, but she said to me that she was not going back to Los Angeles to fight for her election. Melvyn was going to do a little something, and she would send two or three recorded speeches, but her message to the electorate of her constituency was that the United Nations was the most important thing in the world, that she was there to work for the peace of the world, and that they must agree that her duty was to remain on this job, even though a general election was taken and she was up as a candidate.

If I'm rightly informed, in that election in California, all the Democrats in California lost votes. Some of them were beaten, but they were much less successful than they had been in 1944, while Helen greatly increased her majority.

Fry: Yes, that was a very bad year for Democrats in California. All statewide offices went to Republicans.

Noel-Baker: But Helen increased her majority, and did brilliantly well. In 1950, the California Democrats made her fight Nixon for the Senate. In my view, that was a great disaster. If she'd stayed in the

Noel-Baker: House of Representatives, and become the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, she might well have been what Jimmy Carter said the other day to her--a presidential candidate--when they went together to a meeting. Jimmy Carter saw the reception that Helen received. He said, "It's you who should be running!"

Fry: Oh my!

Noel-Baker: I feel sure that at some time along the line between 1950 and today, if Helen had stayed in the House of Representatives, she would have been the presidential candidate, and the first woman president of the United States. I think she would have had an enormous influence on American public life, on the position of women in every country in the world, and on the success of the United Nations. That's another of the ifs of history!

#### Called Home by Attlee - 1946

Fry: Yes it is. How long were you together in the United Nations?

Noel-Baker: Well, not so terribly long as all that. After, I'd suppose, we'd been doing seven or eight weeks in LaGuardia and Lake Success, my prime minister [Clement] Attlee said he must have me come home. The reason was that Winston Churchill was the leader of the opposition. I had been in Winston's government in the war. I've gotten on very well with him. He had a good opinion of me as a minister, and he said it in the House of Commons.

But Attlee said, "It's no good having a good minister who's six thousand miles away. He ought to be in his office and answering to the House of Commons." That was quite wrong and quite mistaken, but Attlee felt the pressure very strongly, and so after seven or eight weeks, and after an extraordinarily dramatic debate with Molotov, I was bundled into an aeroplane and taken back to London. [Laughs]

Fry: It almost sounds like a kidnaping.

Noel-Baker: Well, it was, very nearly. I was so immensely reluctant to go home. Attlee tried to catch me at every intermediate point--in Newfoundland, in Ireland, everywhere. I always refused to speak to him [laughs], because I didn't know what he was going to say. I didn't like him. I always made myself unfindable on our stops across the Atlantic.



Noel-Baker: When we got to the airport in London, I found a message from him saying that I must go out immediately to Chequers, which was a thirty-mile drive from London. And there was Attlee's car waiting for me. I was absolutely dead beat from my debate with Molotov, six hours of it; from the crossing of the Atlantic. I was taken out half-alive to Attlee to be told that I was to be made Secretary of State for Air with my own department.

I was transferred from the Foreign Office, which I deeply resented, but which I was unable to resist. I accepted it only because that I thought that to be able to say that I had been a minister in the service department, in charge of the Royal Air Force, would give me a little extra authority in talking about armaments. Of course, it did, because for the two years in the cabinet I was in the cabinet Committee on Defense and able to argue with the chiefs of staff and with the other service ministers. I got an even more profound knowledge of the armaments of Britain, and of the problems of British defense, than I'd had before, although I was pretty well informed because I'd always had close friends who were high up in the army and the navy and the Royal Air Force.

Fry: You mentioned your debate with Molotov. Did Helen ever have to make a speech in the United Nations, or a debate?

Noel-Baker: Oh, yes. She made speeches. Not in that debate.

I don't remember what the exact date was, but Molotov was moving a motion that all nations should withdraw their troops from the territory of other countries. We had troops in Egypt, we had troops in Greece, we had troops in Indochina, if I remember rightly, certainly in Indonesia; we had troops in India, in Pakistan, in many parts of the world.

I was arguing that the evacuation of the troops from other peoples' countries would certainly be right when we got a disarmament treaty, but that to do it before we got a disarmament treaty might, in fact, not increase the stability in the world. Probably with so much armament loose as there was after the world war, with so many unsettled parts of the globe, it might be disadvantageous to carry out what Molotov was urging. This went on all day in a committee room at Lake Success. I remember as I sat arguing with Molotov, from a quarter past ten until four o'clock in the afternoon, I remember Helen standing by the door, looking at me! [Laughs]

Fry: You must have hated to have left Helen too. Could you tell me some example of Helen's own speeches in the United Nations? Her demeanor and the way she did it is something that there's no record of.



Noel-Baker: Well, she was always brilliant. She was always--  
[end tape 1, side B; begin tape 2, side A]

Personal Relations in Foreign Relations

Lyndon Johnson and the Vietnam War

Fry: We were about to go into your vignettes of Helen.  
[Shuffling papers]

Noel-Baker: Well, my memories of Helen are mostly of our going off to lunch together in the middle of the day, of driving her in the evening and dining, and our private confabulations about what we ought to say in our delegations and in the Assembly about the problems that came up. Whenever Helen spoke, that was an extraordinary vitality, freshness, vigor, clarity of thought, uninhibited expression from her mind and her heart, without any restricting influence of words written on paper. She had it in her being to say what was needed, to say the words.

I remember very vividly, long years after. We always corresponded and exchanged letters and views about what was happening on the big questions of international affairs. In 1965, she came to stay with me in London. While she was with me, Lyndon Johnson made his marvelous speech to a joint session of Congress about civil rights.

A white woman civil rights worker of great distinction had been killed somewhere in the southern states\* and Lyndon Johnson took this opportunity to convoke the two houses, and make one of the epic orations of all history on the equality of the races, on the vital necessity of cooperation and non-discrimination, non-segregation, and the building of a single multi-racial nation.

I remember very well saying to Helen, "Lyndon Johnson not only has the consensus of the United States--" as after that speech he had, as no president had ever had it before. I said,

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\* Viola Liuzzo, in Selma, Alabama.

Noel-Baker: "Lyndon Johnson, by this speech on civil rights, has the consensus of Europe and the world." Every British person of any party was behind what Lyndon Johnson said that day. They knew it, thought it right, talked about it, repeated it, thought it a great event.

About ten days later--Helen was still with me--Lyndon Johnson made another speech, of international affairs and in particular on the Vietnam War. My incomparable and indispensable Italian housekeeper, Gina, who was devoted to Helen, used to bring her breakfast in bed. As Helen heard me getting up and going downstairs, she called out, "Come in, come in!"

So I went into her bedroom and found her up, drinking coffee and eating toast. She said to me, "He's done it!"

I said, "Who has done what?"

She said, "Lyndon has made the speech about foreign affairs that we wanted him to make!" She read me out what he'd said, including his marvelous passage on the Vietnam War.

I agreed with her that this was the turning point in international affairs, and that Lyndon Johnson was going to become the leader of mankind in stopping wars, in building up the United Nations, and in getting rid of armaments. That day, I got a phone call from a friend in Washington who ran a one-hour-a-week radio program, to which he asserted that Lyndon Johnson listened. He said that Lyndon Johnson sometimes called him and talked about the program.

He asked me to make a speech of twenty minutes, commenting on what Lyndon Johnson had said. So I got some professional help and got over that recording, and I made what I subsequently came to think was a pretty bad tape. But it was, though not well done, enthusiastically in favor of Lyndon Johnson, and saying what I thought was going to follow from the speech that he'd made.

Helen and I were both wrong. Lyndon Johnson did not stop the bombing of Vietnam, and it became obvious very soon, as I had always expected from the start, that the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong would not negotiate while they were being bombed, just as the British people would not dream of talking to Hitler while he was bombing London and Liverpool and Manchester and other cities.

Alas, it turned out to be right, and the Vietnam War went on, and Lyndon Johnson got deeper and deeper. Helen and I became more and more convinced that there would be constant deterioration

Noel-Baker: of international relations while what we thought was a charter-breaking war by the United States against the people of Vietnam was continuing.

Fry: Against the Geneva Accords, right?

Noel-Baker: Yes, that's it, and against the charter. Ben Cohen--who is now I think an official deputy attorney general, is that what they're called?--for the United States administration, but who then was at Harvard, and who was delivering a very important international law lecture, denounced the United States' intervention in Vietnam, and said that to say that it is legitimate to go in and intervene in a civil war because the government of the country invites you to do so, is to tear the very heart out of the charter. That is always what I had thought was by far the worst feature of the Vietnam War, as it had been the disastrous mistake of the Bay of Pigs, and John Foster Dulles' attack on Guatemala in 1954, and other charter-breaking demonstrations of American force--the Dominican Republic in May 1965 and lots of others.

#### The Korean War

Fry: What about the Korean War? Do you know what Helen's and your stand was when the United States entered that?

Noel-Baker: Well, I think we both thought that the Korean War--I don't know what Helen thinks now. I haven't talked to her about it, though we just mentioned it yesterday. I think at the time we both thought that the Korean War was started by the North Koreans. At the instigation of Stalin, it was conducted by North Korean divisions, which had been trained in the Russian army and had taken part in Russian military operations during the war.

As Tito said to me in June 1950, when the war was three weeks old, "It could never have happened without the order of Stalin that it should happen." I think we thought--I certainly thought, with great conviction--that the U.N. was right to resist that aggression against the republic which the U.N. itself had established by assembling a resolution, with a U.N. commission on the frontier between North and South Korea, with an Indian chairman that denounced the aggression of the North Koreans.

I still think that that was a use of military power in support of the charter, which was justified, and in fact effective. I thought it was a great mistake to leave all the negotiations of the ending of that war to the United States alone.



Noel-Baker: There were sixteen nations which had military contingents in the force, and two of them, notably, were Abyssinia and Greece, which have both been victims of aggression in violation of the covenant of the League of Nations before the Second World War. The Greek and Abyssinian peoples insisted on sending battalions to Korea in order to assert the sanctity of the charter and the vital importance that the charter should not be broken. The Abyssinian and Greek contingents, in fact, became very famous for their great bravery and dedication to the success of the resistance to Stalin's North Korean divisions.

It took far too long to end the Korean War, and it was only done as Khrushchev began to get power in the United States. It's not generally remembered that, in fact, it was done in the General Assembly, and that the two major agents in bringing the resolution that brought the war to an end were Krishna Menon of India--almost the only good thing he ever did. He was my pupil when he was a young man at the London School of Economics [laughs]--and Anthony Eden. They were the two men who brought the Korean War to an end by an Assembly resolution that they engineered.

Eden stayed on three weeks extra in the Assembly after he intended to go home. It was, next to the Geneva agreements, the best thing that Eden ever did.

#### Status of China

Fry: I'm trying to remember if China was anything that would have been in your consciousness when you and Helen were together at the United Nations. Later, as you know, it became terribly important in her campaign against Nixon, because she felt that China should be a member of the United Nations.

Noel-Baker: Yes, it was Chiang Kai-shek's China in 1946. After '49, Chiang Kai-shek's China was no longer. Taiwan was represented, I suppose, because they were only put out when--yes, they were there. When we dealt with them, I came over for the Kashmir

Noel-Baker: dispute between India and Pakistan. I was three months in New York in the Security Council, trying to settle Kashmir in 1948. The Taiwan Chinese delegate was there, and in fact wrecked my most promising effort to get a quick settlement.

Fry: Do you remember ever discussing mainland China's representation or even recognition with Helen in later years?

Noel-Baker: Well, I remember discussing it with her in 1948. She, unfortunately, was down in Washington with the Congress when I was stuck in New York. I was the kind of man who did not go to California and Idaho to make speeches all the time. I stuck in New York, doing a job. Not all my British colleagues followed my example. So I didn't see Helen very much except when I was able to sneak down to Washington every now and then to have a talk. I feel certain that at that time we agreed that Chiang Kai-shek was very near the end of the road, and that the Long March was going to succeed, and that we ought to get them in. I couldn't give you a specific date of conversation. I have no doubt that we covered that topic.

I had a very striking conversation with Tito in 1950. I was then great friends with our ambassador in Yugoslavia, Charles Peek, who was in Belgrade from 1945 to 1950. Afterwards he went to Athens, and our friendship continued.

In 1947, he asked me to go and visit Tito, to open a British book exhibition. Tito came to the book exhibition and made a speech. Charles Peek got a promise from him that my speech would be printed verbatim in the Yugoslav press, whatever I said. I talked about free speech and diplomacy. Charles Peek and I got on extraordinarily well with Tito, and we had a very mate-y three days, in which we saw him a lot, and made a lot of progress. We sent the trade delegation afterwards to negotiate a very important trade agreement--very important for Tito, because the Russians were blockaded and treating him very badly.

Then Charles Peek asked me to come again in June of 1950. I went to Bled, where Tito was occupying Prince Paul's summer palace.

Noel-Baker: I visited at the palace in Bled afterwards, on rather traumatic circumstances. I have a very tragic memory of Bled because if the United States had listened to us and recognized China, the Korean War might have been very different. As it was at that time, I swam in the lake, after which Charles took me to lunch with Tito.

After lunch, Tito led me into a corner, and without the ambassador! In broken English, German, and Italian, he told me that he wanted me to take a message to Attlee and Bevin. He said, in essence, "I want you to tell them that they must get China into the United Nations as quickly as ever they can!" He said, "This Korean War has just begun. It couldn't have happened without Stalin's orders. It's being conducted by North Korean divisions trained by Stalin. It's a violation of the charter. It oughtn't to have happened. There's a great danger that China may be drawn in."

He said, "I know the Russians and I know the Chinese extremely well because I've been in prison with them. When you're imprisoned with people, you get to understand them." Tito's still alive. I don't know if I ought to be saying this.

Fry: You can put it under seal, if you wish.

Noel-Baker: This could be off the record, could it?

Fry: Yes.

Noel-Baker: Tito said to me, "The Russians will never have allies who are not satellites. The Chinese will never be anybody's satellite. What is the answer? Get the Chinese into the United Nations as quickly as ever you can!"

It so happened that [John] Foster Dulles had just written a book in which he said that we'd have to see whether Mao Tse-tung and his colleagues established their authority over the mainland of China, but if they do so, then after a period of months, we ought to recognize their government and let them in to the United Nations.

I took Tito's message home to Attlee and Bevin.



Noel-Baker: Within a week or two, we recognized the Chinese. Unfortunately, they did not say what we wanted them to say about Taiwan. We went on for a good many years with only *chargés d'affaires* on each side instead of ambassadors. But we had done what Tito wanted, and we tried to persuade the Americans to let China come into the U.N. Unfortunately, we didn't, and then there happened [General Douglas] MacArthur's march up to the river to the frontier, and the Chinese counterattack sweeping down to the very south of Korea. The marines just held the line, and just managed to mount the counteroffensive, which took the U.N. forces back to the frontier with North Korea, where it was stabilized, and where ultimately peace was made, after far too long a delay.

#### Richard Nixon (British Views)

Fry: In 1950, when Helen ran against Richard Nixon for U.S. Senator from California, how was this viewed by those in high government circles in Britain, or was it within their awareness at all?

Noel-Baker: I was very much aware of it, and I was very bitterly sorry that Helen was not going on in the House of Representatives. Of course, I believed she would win against Nixon, and I believe it was only his dirty tricks, and particularly his telephone operation, that defeated her.\*

Fry: Was that much known over there at the time?

Noel-Baker: Well, it was known to me. Yes, I think it was pretty well known. I think "Tricky Dick" became a familiar nickname in Britain, as it was in the United States. Nobody trusted Nixon after that. He came over to the House of Commons and he made a speech at a meeting in our Commonwealth Parliamentary Association rooms, which I thought very second-rate. I thought him very second-rate.

Fry: What were the general appraisals of him at that time, among you and your colleagues?

Noel-Baker: Well, I think we all thought he was just a politician who was prepared to resort to illegal and unconstitutional methods to win an election or to achieve any other purpose that he had in his political life.

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\* This refers to telephone calls in which the caller allegedly would say to a voter something like, "Did you know Helen Douglas is a Communist?" and hang up.

- Fry: This was perceived rather early, then, in Nixon's career, is that right?
- Noel-Baker: It was almost at the beginning of his career. It was the first thing that made him prominent. Beating Helen was a tremendous achievement for any politician at that time, and a disastrous one. [Fry glances at clock ] You want me to stop?
- Fry: No. I was looking to see how close we are to lunch. I hope that you're not feeling overtired, because I wanted to ask you another question.
- Noel-Baker: Tally ho!

### The Soviet Union

- Fry: All right. About those lunches and dinners that you had: [chuckling] I would like you to suspend your Fifth Amendment privileges in the United States and tell me what you talked about. Did you really talk about foreign policy?
- Noel-Baker: [Matter-of-factly] Oh yes, Endlessly. Endlessly. About what had happened in commission in the morning, about what was going to happen in the afternoon, about whom we should lobby on this or on that, about what she could do, about what I could do, about what I would say to the Norwegians and the Dutch and the Belgians and my other friends, about what she would say to the Latinos, or to her own delegation, et cetera. Yes, oh yes. We talked a lot of politics. I won't say we talked exclusive politics, and you wouldn't believe me if I said it! [Laughter]
- Fry: No, I wouldn't. [Laughter] It does sound like your and Helen's friendship formed a good bridge between the British and American delegations at the time.
- Noel-Baker: Well, I think it did. I think it did.
- Fry: Can you think of a specific instance in which you and Helen did plan something, in order to give me a picture of how you carried out your lobbying, your plans to influence people to your point of view, within various other delegations?
- Noel-Baker: This is all pretty vague, because this is thirty years ago. We certainly talked a good deal about how to deal with the Soviet delegation. I had a Soviet colleague in the economic and social council, where I was representing Britain as Minister of State



Noel-Baker: in the Foreign Office. I don't even remember his name. He went out of the U.N. operations and into the management of industry in the Soviet Union, I think about the time that Helen dropped out. He went on for some years after I left.

I used to argue with him about why they were so hostile to us and why they didn't work with the Labour government, which was deeply committed to Anglo-Soviet friendship and Anglo-Soviet cooperation. Once after a long dinner, at which he had done very good justice to the California wine, he said, "You want us to work together. After you have had your slump, then we can work together."

I said, "But we aren't going to have a slump. We're going to have full employment. That's the Labour government policy, and it's working out, and we shall do it. They're demobilizing fourteen million people from our armed forces, and our armament industries, but there are always more jobs waiting to be filled than there are unemployed looking for jobs." That was true, from 1945 up to 1951. So the slump didn't happen, but the Soviets were convinced that in a capitalist system, after a war there would be a slump, and that when it was over, then perhaps we could work together. Perhaps they hoped that when the slump came in Europe, they would be able to take over some of the European countries. That was an unexpressed part of what my Russian friend was speaking.

I think Helen and I talked a good deal about the way our delegation ought to deal with the Soviets, what kind of approach --friendly, but not compromising on vital principles, not letting them think they could carry out sponsored revolutions and sponsored votes against democratic institutions.

I hope and believe that our work did a good deal to make our two governments follow the right line in dealing with the Soviets, and not going into open conflict with them, but in being very firm and democratic.

The "Coloreds": South Africa and India

Noel-Baker: The other thing that comes into my mind is the question of the relations between the blacks--coloreds--and the white nations. We call them white. They call us pink or gray. Some people--  
[end of tape 2, side A; begin tape 2, side B]



Fry: These are very short tapes.

Noel-Baker: I'm having you all to myself, and that wasn't what you wanted.

Fry: Yes, it is. Go right ahead. I don't need any assistance.  
[Laughs]

Noel-Baker: The other thing was about the relations between the colored and the white people. In a very early stage of the Assembly--the first day or two--Smuts made it plain in our Commonwealth meeting (I talked about our Commonwealth meetings) that he wanted to move some resolution or make some kind of motion that no one should discuss the policy of apartheid in South Africa, or any question of internal administration that affected the relations between whites and blacks, whether they were majorities or minorities.

I talked about this to Helen. I succeeded in stopping Smuts bringing this up, because this would have made a major collision with Mrs. Pandit and the Indian delegation, quite apart from the other delegations who were there.

I think what Helen and I were able to do with our respective delegations on this point was quite important. When Attlee brought me home from New York after my debate with Molotov, we were in the middle of a complicated exchange of views in the political committee in which Mrs. Pandit was taking a very strong and a rather aggressive line. I had to leave it to my colleague Hartley Shorcross, who was then attorney general of the British government, to carry on what I'd done. I think Hartley Shorcross was able to steer it through without a major collision.

Fry: Are there any anecdotes about the relationship with Madame Pandit and the Indian government while you were in the United Nations?

Noel-Baker: Well, we had a really warm personal relationship with Mrs. Pandit. I had known Nehru a little, and I knew Mrs. Gandhi, his daughter Indira, rather well. I tried to make her dance with me in London. She wouldn't do that, because she said the Indian people wouldn't like it. There might be photographs. I wanted to take her out to dance, and she said, "I love to dance, but I can't do it." I've always deeply regretted that that was so, because I might have established a more important relationship with her, if I'd only been allowed to take her out dancing a number of times.  
[Chuckles]

Fry: Yes, I can see this was one of your techniques of diplomacy.  
[Laughter]

Noel-Baker: Anyway, I remember a luncheon party which our delegation gave to Mrs. Pandit and her colleagues, which was a very cordial affair. I was rather close to the Indian civil servants, because they were nearly all people who had been at Oxford or Cambridge, and who had had the same kind of training as I'd had, and whose minds marched with mine.

When Mrs. Pandit came to make her first speech in the Assembly, she took up with her to the platform a typewritten speech which the officials had spent a lot of time working on, in which there was no word that could be offensive to any Briton or anybody else in the Commonwealth. Everything was very carefully phrased to keep it diplomatic and establishment.

When she got up on this platform, of course she put the speech down and never looked at it again! When she launched into her flood of eloquence--she was a very eloquent woman--she came to a passage in which she said, "Brother and sister delegates of the General Assembly! The British Empire is breaking up before your eyes! With me, thank God that that is so!"

I was sitting at the end of the row, with Helen sitting here, and there was a corridor down which Mrs. Pandit had to come from the platform, and up this corridor to her seat.

Fry: Right past your chair?

Noel-Baker: This meant that she was passing very close to me. I considered the question, should I rise in accordance with Assembly practice and shake her hand and congratulate her warmly on her marvelous speech, or should I sit still and let the insult about the British Empire freeze our relationship?

When she came, I stood up and shook her warmly by the hand. Two or three years ago, one of her daughters asked me to write something for a book about Mrs. Pandit, so I wrote an account of that episode! [Laughs] That I know Helen and I talked a lot about. She was, of course, very keen on civil rights and proper relationship with the blacks, and her friendships with blacks, and her support by blacks. She had, I think, a majority of blacks in Los Angeles in her district.

Fry: She had quite a lot.

Noel-Baker: They put up a black candidate against her who had no success.

Fry: Well, is there anything else, now, that you would like to add, on your friendship with Helen? It has continued through the years, I see, as evidenced by the fact that you're sitting here in her house in Vermont. [Laughs]



Noel-Baker: When she sits on my bed and gives me tea in the morning--I feel exactly as I felt in 1945. Need I say more? [Warm laughter]

Fry: How often have you been able to see each other through the years?

Noel-Baker: Well, not all that terribly often, because once when she came to Europe, I wasn't there. I don't know why--I was in Greece, or I could have been in Japan. I don't remember. But nearly every other time that she's come to Europe, I've seen her. After she was in Russia, she came to stay with me. I've nearly always seen her when I've come over here, but not always. Sometimes she's been in California; sometimes she was in Vermont and I couldn't come.

I've been here before and enjoyed it immensely. I was here for election night in 1968, when Nixon defeated [Hubert] Humphrey. I sat in the New York apartment of the Douglasses until 4:00 a.m. and watched Humphrey almost winning, almost winning, catching up and almost winning, and being defeated in the end by abstentionists with whom I'd been consorting in Washington and elsewhere, and whom I thought immensely wrong, because whatever Humphrey's defects, at least he would have been a much better president than Nixon! [Laughs]

We would have had a much better chance of having the Vietnam war brought to an end, and a much better chance of leading with disarmament, and we should have had no Watergate.

Fry: How did Helen take Nixon's victory that night?

Noel-Baker: Well, it wasn't a victory till the next day. I think she didn't like it at all, anymore than I did. I was immensely depressed by it. I remember being in a Labour party foreign affairs committee. (I was chairman for a long time, until I left the House of Commons in 1970; after I wasn't in office any more, I was chairman of the foreign affairs group of the party.) I remember some of them saying, "Oh well, Nixon is bound to make peace in Vietnam. He's bound to deal with armaments. He can't let things go on as they are now."

I said, "You don't know Nixon. You take my prediction--he'll go on with the Vietnam War. He'll make it worse than ever before. He'll do everything the soldiers want him to do on armaments." They all said, "Oh no, you're wrong, you're wrong!" A little later, I was able to point out to them that I'd been right.



Fry: Yes, undoubtedly right. Is there anything else you'd like to add before we cut it off for lunch?

Noel-Baker: I think I've said it.

Fry: Thank you. [Tape turned off and restarted]

#### The United States and British Aid to Greece

Fry: Let me ask you to repeat what you just discussed relating to the Greek-Turkish aid bill, which came up while Helen was on the Foreign Affairs Committee in the House. Did you have anything to do with this?

Noel-Baker: Well, in Britain I was very keen for British support of the Greek government against the Communist rebels, because I was quite convinced that while there was poverty in Greece and people too rich, nevertheless there were not the conditions that called for an armed revolution. The Communists, in fact, had not got the people who could make a useful or constructive revolution in Greece. It was far, far better for them to go on with their democratic institution and rely on liberal opinion to bring social progress. Also I was very active in going to Greece, as I have a home there.

My wife spent a lot of time there being beleaguered in her home by guerilla Communist forces, who surrounded our property. They surrounded our home so much that when I went there, none of us was allowed to walk more than a kilometer from the house. If we went down the main road, we always had a soldier with us. That was a great trial for me, because whenever I went there, I used to walk in the woods and hills as much as ever I could. I wasn't allowed to. The Communists were committing some pretty un-Greek atrocities around the place, in our province of Euboea.

I urged very strongly that if the Greeks received support--economic and military support, arms and military presence--from Britain and the United States, they would in fact defeat the Communist revolt and re-establish a democratic system. That happened, and I think that the field marshal who carried it out on behalf of the Greek government--Papagos, who had won the victories against the Italians in the beginning of the world war, and who won the victory against the Communists in the years 1946 to '50--was an extremely enlightened, liberal and efficient man. Next to the great Venizelos of long ago, he was certainly

Noel-Baker: the greatest prime minister of Greece whom I have known, and who had the best administration.

In the years '51, '52, '53, the Papagos government was a very progressive and very efficient government, and doing very well. I've always thought that what I did to encourage help for the Greek democracy against the Communist revolt was one of the useful things of my political life.

I don't remember how much I was in correspondence with Helen about it at that time. I must have been. There must be some letters to that extent. I expect Helen threw them all away; I don't know. I've had so many changes of secretary over the years, because my secretaries will commit the folly of getting married and leaving me! [Laughter] The ones who came in to take their place can never find the back papers. [Laughs] I've got a whole air-raid shelter full of blue canvas bags of papers, starting in 1919. I don't know whether anyone can find anything in them at any time! [Laughs]

Fry: It would be good if you have some letters from Helen in those papers. Maybe she'll have some letters from you here?

Noel-Baker: It's conceivable. I have a most delectable, charming secretary now, who has only one defect--[lowers voice confidentially] she has a husband!

Fry: [Sympathetically] Oh dear.

Noel-Baker: She has to leave me promptly at six o'clock every evening. She can never come on Saturdays or Sundays, because she's entertaining five, ten, fifteen guests that he has invited without telling her. They have a lovely country estate in the south of England, near the Battle of Hastings. But she always says that she's extremely interested to get into rompers with me--to get into "overalls"--and go down to the air-raid shelter and start opening the blue bags. And I say, if only we can bring a conclusion to the book on armaments, which I've been trying to finish for two years, and over which I've been defeated by defective eyesight, I'll help you to go down to the blue bags and start investigations, and see what comes out from 1919 onwards!

Fry: You can then do your entire life history.

Noel-Baker: What I would try to bring out of it is the struggle between the disarmers and the militarists, and the misdeeds and wickedness and cheating of the militarists.



## The Marshall Plan

- Fry: Along that line, what about the Marshall Plan? Did this touch your life at all?
- Noel-Baker: Well, I was by that time in the air ministry. Let's see. Wait a minute--'47? I became Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations in 1947. I was along the corridor from Ernest Bevin. I used to go virtually every morning about sixty yards from my office to Ernest Bevin's office and talk to him. We talked a great deal about the Marshall Plan. He had a lot to do with proposing it to Marshall. I don't know what the record shows. My talks with Ernie lead me to believe that it was he who had suggested to Marshall that he should do this.
- Fry: Really?
- Noel-Baker: I don't know whether that could be found or not, or whether it's a suitable thing to publish. Certainly Ernie Bevin was very much in, at the start of the Marshall Plan. There were many of my close friends, including Sir Robert Jackson (the ex-husband of Barbara Ward) who was number two to Governor Lehman in UNRRA. Governor Lehman and he, Robert Jackson, both felt that it was wrong to wind up UNRRA, and we should have given a further one percent of national income, or perhaps two percent, and carried on with UNRRA, rather than starting the Marshall Plan.
- I remember one very dramatic thing about the Marshall Plan. I was good friends with young Masaryk, the son of the great Jan Masaryk, who was ambassador in London. He went back to the foreign minister to Benish. I was close friends with Benish, and had worked with him a great deal in Geneva and the League of Nations and then the disarmament conference. I used to go and see him when he was president. I went officially as a British minister to pay an official visit to Benish, and to congratulate him on the re-establishment of Czechoslovak independence after the war and so on.
- I remember very vividly driving across Czechoslovakia with young Masaryk, and how he had no guards to look after him, and how the people all crowded round to shake his hand, and how immensely popular he was.
- He told me that after the Marshall Plan was first proposed, he had immediately consulted Benish, and had informed the United States and Britain that Czechoslovakia was in on their side with the Marshall Plan, and how a week later the Soviets put such enormous pressure to bear on them that they had to withdraw it.



- Noel-Baker: That was a very great blow to Masaryk and Benish, which preceded by about a year the final blow, in which Masaryk was killed and Benish exiled. Not exiled from Czechoslovakia, but exiled from power. He was sent to live on his country estate away from Prague.
- Fry: Did you know that Helen was on the House committee that voted out the Marshall Plan bill at the time? Do you remember writing her about that?
- Noel-Baker: Well, I must have known that she was on the committee. I don't remember writing to her about it. It could easily have been that I did.
- Fry: Did you have a pretty regular correspondence?
- Noel-Baker: Well, not regular. We didn't write once a week, or once a month, but we wrote when we had something to say. I expect I wrote her about the Marshall Plan. I don't remember.
- Fry: That will come out in the blue bags and in Helen's papers. It may be on file at the University of Oklahoma now.
- Noel-Baker: I'm afraid I must tell you the things I remember most of all about Helen were all the personal things! [Laughs]
- Fry: I'm probably missing the big story right here.
- Noel-Baker: I wrote to tell her how much I loved her, and how much I wished--et cetera, et cetera. [Laughs]
- Fry: That's the beautiful, poignant story of British-American relations.
- Noel-Baker: [Softly] Yes, it was a very beautiful story.

Transcriber: Leslie Goodman-Malamuth  
Final Typist: Ann Enkoji

## Lord Philip John Noel-Baker, P.C.

### Who's Who in Britain, 1976

NOEL-BAKER, Rt. Hon. Philip J., PC 1945; b Nov. 1889; s of late J. Allen Baker, MP; *m* 1915, Irene (*d* 1956), *o d* of Frank Noel, British landowner, of Achmetaga, Greece; one s. *Educ*: Bootham School, York; Haverford Coll., Pa; King's Coll., Cambridge, MA. Historical Tripos, Part I, Class II, 1910; Economics Tripos, Part II, Class I, 1912; University Whewell Scholar, 1911 (continued, 1913); President CUAC, 1910-12; President Cambridge Union Society, 1912; Vice-Principal, Ruskin Coll., Oxford, 1914. First Commandant Friend's Ambulance Unit, Aug. 1914-July 1915; Officer First British Ambulance Unit for Italy, 1915-18. Mons Star; Silver Medal for Military Valour (Italy), 1917; Croce di Guerra, 1918. League of Nations Section of British Delegation during Peace Conference, 1919; League of Nations Secretariat till 1922; contested (Lab) Handsworth Division of Birmingham, 1924; MP (Lab), for Coventry, 1929-31, for Derby, 1936-50, for Derby South, 1950-70. PPS to the Sec. of State for Foreign Affairs, 1929-31; Parly Sec. to Min. of War Transport, 1942-45; Minister of State, FO, 1945-46; Sec. of State for Air, 1946-47; Sec. of State for Commonwealth Relations, 1947-50; Minister of Fuel and Power, 1950-51. Chairman, Foreign Affairs Group, Parly Labour Party, 1964-70. Late Fellow, King's Coll., Cambridge; Hon. Fellow, since 1961, Sir Ernest Cassel Prof. of International Relations in the Univ. of London, 1924-29; Member of British Delegation to the 10th Assembly of the League of Nations, 1929 and 1930; Principal Asst to the Pres. of the Disarmament Conference at Geneva, 1932-33; British Delegate to UN Preparatory Commn, 1945. Mem., British Deleegn to Gen. Assembly of UN, 1946-47; Delegate to Colombo Conf. on Economic Aid, 1950. Dodge lecturer, Yale Univ., 1934; President, International Council on Sport and Physical Recreation, UNESCO, 1960-; Howland Prize for distinguished work in the sphere of Government, Yale Univ., 1934; Nobel Peace Prize, 1959, Albert Schweitzer Book Prize, 1960; Olympia Diploma of Merit, 1975. *Hon. Degrees*: Birmingham Univ.; Nottingham Univ.; Manchester Univ.; Univ. of Colombo; Queen's Univ., Ontario; Haverford Coll., USA; Brandeis Univ., USA. *Publications*: The Geneva Protocol, 1925; Disarmament, 1926; The League of Nations at Work, 1926; Disarmament and the Coolidge Conference, 1927. J. Allen Baker, MP, a Memoir (with E. B. Baker). The Juridical Status of the British Dominions in International Law, 1929; The Private Manufacture of Armaments, Vol. I, 1936; The Arms Race: A Programme for World Disarmament, 1958; pamphlets and articles. *Address*: 16 South Eaton Place, SW1. T: 01-730 5377. *See also Francis Noel-Baker.*



From: The Rt. Hon. Philip Noel-Baker, M.P.

16, South Eaton Place,  
London, S.W. 1.

23rd June, 1969.

Dear Helen,

It is one of the mysteries of the world why I do not ever write to you, considering that I think of it every day, and make frequent efforts to start.

In any case, I start by telling you how sorry I am for my long and horrid silence. I was immensely grateful for your last letter. I agree with you from the bottom of my heart that nothing matters much, except Disarmament. All else stems from that. I am greatly afraid that the Pentagon will let Nixon give Vietnam to Ho Chi Ming, on condition that their armaments are not seriously reduced. My own Government here is utterly demoralised on the subject, though the requirements of their internal policy, (housing, schools, hospitals), have forced them to make certain cuts in the expenditure of Armed Forces, Foreign Bases and weapon production, and they allege that their expenditure to date, since they came into power in October, 1964, amounts to £2,000 million pounds less than the Conservatives were planning to spend, if they had not been defeated. I do not find this somewhat synthetic sum very convincing; in any case, the fact remains that we are spending as high a percentage of our gross National Product, (6.9%), as the Conservatives were spending in the year 1963/64.

Far worse, our leading Ministers accept the sophistries expounded by Denis Fealey in his lamentable lecture in Munich, and denounced by me in the eloquent oration which I sent you in March.





- 2 -

Far worse still, none of our Ministers seem to appreciate that the partial measures discussed in the Committee of Eighteen, (Test Bans, non-proliferation Treaty, etc.), have <sup>not</sup> diminished, <sup>and</sup> ~~or~~ could ~~not~~ diminish, the war risk in the smallest degree. It is extremely unlikely that the non-proliferation Treaty will ever come into force; it has occupied the best part of four years in the Committee of Eighteen.

In various quarters a big fuss is being made about biological and chemical weapons. Quite a lot of books have been written; the British Government has made a solemn proposal for the abolition of biologicals, (manufacture, possession and use); this would be an improvement on the Geneva protocol of 1925, but it is, I am afraid, as a separate measure, extremely unlikely to be accepted by other countries. An eminent scientist, working in Pugwash, said to me the other day that she thought the fuss about B. and C. was really intended to divert attention from nuclear and conventional disarmament, that is, from the armaments which constitute the real dangers to the world.

[ Only one thing gives me a modicum of hope. The smaller Nations in the Committee of Eighteen have begun to demand that the leading military powers shall take up again the Soviet and U.S. Draft Treaties of general and complete disarmament put forward in 1962, and that the Committee should start seriously to work on seeking a compromise on the various points on which the two Draft Treaties differ. I think this is important, because I am sure that the two Treaties are by far



the best basis for real disarmament that we are ever likely to get, and I hope everyone who can will give maximum support to the smaller Nations in the Eighteen Nation Committee.

/ I am very well, & hope that you are all very well, too. But I want so much to see you. Can't you come over? Gina would love to have you, & so would we all. Anyway, write to me again. What a pity the Atlantic is so wide. And kiss Mary for me, please.

My love,

Your devoted Philip N.B.

I am going to send a copy of your letter to Sir Edward Boyle, who, with Lester Pearson, is conducting an enquiry on Economic Aid to Developing countries.

Mrs Felen Cahagan Douglas,

50, Riverside Drive,

New York City 24,

N.Y.

U.S.A.



From: The Rt. Hon. Philip Noel-Baker, M.P.

10, South Eaton Place,

London, S.W. 1.

1st October, 1969.

Dear Helen,

Thank you very much for your letter. It was very good of you to write, and I hope the strength of your calligraphy means that you are very well. I am sending herewith a copy of a Paper which I have written for Pugwash Conference in Russia later this month, with which I hope you will agree. I should be grateful for comments.

I wish the students of the world could be brought to see that militarism is their real enemy; that militarism is responsible for nearly all the evil in the existing Establishments, and that militarism will disappear when armaments are abolished and armed forces reduced to militias for internal public order.

I am going to have a try with our students here, but I am concerned that the superb effort being made by American students over Vietnam may raise the basic cause of Vietnam, and of almost all our other problems.

With thanks again for your help, and my love to you all,

Yours ever,

*Philip N.B.*

Mrs. Helen Graham Douglas,

80, Riverside Drive,

New York, New York 10024,

U.S.A.

*I don't know if the scientists  
will like it!*

Enclosure





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Members of Congress Oral History Project, 1978-;  
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Since 1965, Interviewer-Editor Regional Oral History  
Office on subjects related to forestry, conservation,  
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INGRID WINTHER SCOBIE

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Assistant Executive Secretary, Organization of American Historians, 1970-73; Lecturer, History Department, Princeton University, 1975, in twentieth-century United States history; Senior Fulbright-Hays Lecturer, Buenos Aires, Argentina, 1976, in United States history; Lecturer, History Department, University of California, San Diego, 1977-1979, in twentieth-century United States history; University of California award for innovative curriculum development for course on family and community history; taught oral history technique in all courses.

Professional papers at Western History Association (1969, 1973), Newberry Library (1979), Berkshire Conference on Women's History (1981); published articles in Pacific Historical Review, California Historical Quarterly, Public Historian.

Research in progress: Helen Gahagan Douglas and Twentieth-Century America; includes oral history interviews; research travel grants for this research from the Eleanor Roosevelt Institute and the American Philosophical Society.

Interviewer-editor for the Regional Oral History Office, 1978-80, for the Helen Gahagan Douglas Project.













